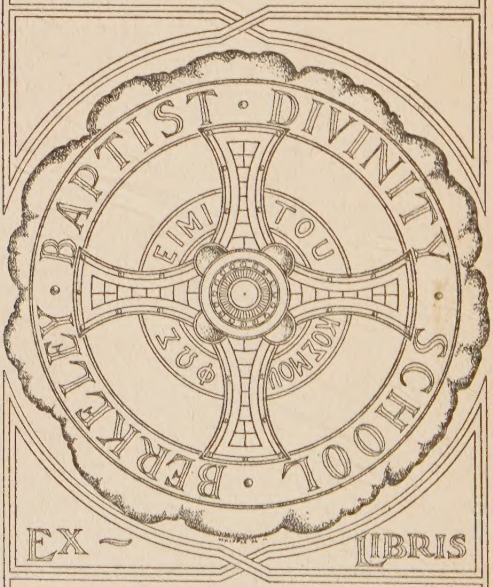
Gift of
A. B. P. S.



Accession No. _____

Date _____

Presented by the
AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,
BIBLE DEPARTMENT,
1420 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa.

Rev. F. E. Seofield,
Marshfield, Ore.

BAPTIST

PAMPHLETS.

(B)

GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION
LIBRARY
1962

BERKELEY BAPTIST DIVINITY SCHOOL LIBRARY

PHILADELPHIA:
AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,
1420 Chestnut Street.

BX
6339
C5
B3b

BX
6339
C5
B3b

BERKELEY BAPTIST
DIVINITY SCHOOL
LIBRARY

GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION
LIBRARY
1962

CONTENTS.

1. The Scriptural Terms of Admission to the Lord's Supper. By Albert N. Arnold, D. D.

2. Close Communion. By Alvah Hovey, D. D.

3. Scriptural Communion. By J. B. Jeter, D. D.

4. The Christian Law of Union in Communion. By George W. Sansom, D. D.

5. Restriction of the Lord's Supper; What it is Not, and what it Is. By Rev. Henry F. Colby.

6. The Mutual Relation of Baptism and the Communion. By George D. B. Pepper, D. D.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/baptistpamphlets0000unse_l5z7

Prerequisites to Communion.

THE

SCRIPTURAL TERMS

OF

ADMISSION TO THE LORD'S SUPPER.

BY

REV. ALBERT N. ARNOLD, D.D.

"Now I praise you, brethren, that ye * * keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you."—1 Cor. xi. 2.

PHILADELPHIA:
AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,
1420 Chestnut Street.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1860, by
GOULD AND LINCOLN,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Massachusetts.

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE substance of the following pages was read as an Essay before the Annual Conference of the Baptist Ministers of Massachusetts, at Middleboro', October 30, 1860. With a few changes and additions, it is now published, at the request of those who heard it.

WESTBORO', Nov. 16, 1860.

CONTENTS.

Page

NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE 9

I.

FIRST PREREQUISITE:—AVOWAL OF DISCIPLESHIP 12

II.

SECOND PREREQUISITE:—BAPTISM . . . 16

EXAMPLES OF SCRIPTURE 18

NATURE AND IMPORT OF THE TWO ORDINANCES . 20

PEDOBAPTIST TESTIMONIES 25

ROBERT HALL'S VIEW 27

OBJECTIONS AGAINST IT 29

1. Contrary to Belief and Practice of all Churches, 29

2. Assumes an Unscriptural Inequality between the two Ordinances 30

3. Tends to do away with Baptism 32

4. Tends to do away with the Visible Church altogether 32

III.

Page

THIRD PREREQUISITE: — CHURCH MEMBERSHIP 36

THE LORD'S SUPPER A SYMBOL OF CHURCH FELLOWSHIP 43

OBJECTION ANSWERED 46

SUPPOSED PRIMITIVE LAXITY 49

PROMINENCE OF THE CHURCH RELATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT 52

THE WORD "CHURCH" NOT USED LOOSELY . . 55

UNIFORMITY IN PRIMITIVE CHURCH USAGES . . 57

STRICTNESS RATHER THAN LAXITY 58

MEMBERSHIP IN ONE CHURCH NOT MEMBERSHIP IN ALL CHURCHES 61

IV.

FOURTH PREREQUISITE: — AN ORDERLY WALK 63

I. IMMORAL CONDUCT 65

II. DISOBEDIENCE TO THE COMMANDS OF CHRIST, 67

Pedobaptists chargeable with this in respect to one Command 68

Page

III. HERESY 70

Pedobaptists chargeable with Grave Errors . . . 72

Mixed Communion neutralizes our Protest against these Errors 75

IV. SCHISM 77

Mixed Communion tends to Schism 78

An Objection answered 80

Recapitulation 81

VARIOUS OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED . . . 82

I. PRIMITIVE RULES NO LONGER APPLICABLE . . 82

The Laws of Christ have not changed 84

Return to the Primitive Order desirable 84

II. BAPTISM BUT AN EXTERNAL RITE 87

III. PEDOBAPTISTS THINK THEMSELVES BAPTIZED, 89

IV. STRICT COMMUNION A HINDRANCE TO UNION, 90

Truth before Union 91

A Good Conscience before Union 92

Allegiance to Christ before Union 93

Baptists bound to be Strict in regard to the Ordinances 93

Baptists not responsible for the Separation . . . 94

Page

Baptism, no less than the Lord's Supper, a Symbol of Church Union 96

Mixed Communion not a Cure, but a Cause, of Disunion 97

Mixed Communion a Fictitious Expression of Union 102

V. WHY NOT MAKE AN EXCEPTION IN FAVOR OF BAPTIZED MEMBERS OF PEDOBAPTIST CHURCHES? 103

VI. WHY NOT DISPENSE WITH THE RULE IN EXTREME CASES? 106

VII. ALLEGED INCONSISTENCY OF OUR PRACTICE, 108

1. We expect to Commune with Pedobaptists in Heaven 108
2. We reject the Better and receive the Worse . . 109
3. We recognize Pedobaptists as Brethren in many ways 112

VIII. ALLEGED IMPOLICY OF OUR PRACTICE . . 104

CONCLUSION 117

PREREQUISITES TO COMMUNION.

NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE.

It is conceded at the outset that the terms of admission to the Lord's Supper, or the qualifications required of all who participate in that sacred feast, are not matters of explicit and formal statement in the Scriptures, and that we must ascertain what the will of the Lord is in this matter as well as we can from particular examples, from general principles, and from incidental allusions, contained in Scripture. Nor need we be particularly surprised or grieved that it should be so; for the same is true in regard to many other important matters pertaining to Christian doctrine and duty, and to

the order of the church of Christ. It is so in regard to the time and manner of keeping the Lord's day holy unto him; and it is so — to refer to a more pertinent illustration still — in regard to the qualifications for receiving baptism. It seems very plain to us Baptists, that the scriptural terms of admission to baptism are repentance and faith; and yet we do not find anywhere in Scripture the express words, "Let every penitent believer be baptized, and let none but penitent believers be baptized;" nor even precisely that form of verbal warrant which we sometimes hear quoted as Scripture, "Repent, believe, and be baptized." Yet we are none the less confident, and none the less justified in maintaining our denominational views in regard to that rite, and in insisting upon these qualifications in all who come to us asking for baptism. For the scriptural warrant for requiring these qualifications for baptism, though not thus direct and explicit, is sufficient and decisive. I do not say that the proper qualifications for admission to the Lord's Supper are equally clear from the Scriptures; but I say that they are to be ascertained and proved by the same *kind*

of evidence. We are not entitled to demand any particular degree of plainness, or measure of fulness, in the evidence of what the Lord requires of us in any case; it is sufficient that we can ascertain it by *searching* the Scriptures; and if the indexes of our duty which we find there, whether few or many, all point in the same direction, — if, though appropriate proof-texts be not so numerous as we could wish, the tenor of Scripture is unambiguous and self-consistent, — we ought to be content. If we are prepared to be content with this kind and degree of evidence, I think we shall have no reason to complain that it is wanting in regard to the case before us, — THE PROPER QUALIFICATIONS FOR ADMISSION TO THE LORD'S SUPPER.

I.

AVOWAL OF DISCIPLESHIP.

The first qualification which I mention as required, on scriptural principles, in those who come to the Lord's table, is, *that they be avowed disciples of Christ.* There is no apparent reason why any others should *wish* to partake of the Lord's Supper; its nature and design are such that no others can *suitably* partake of it; nor can any others find in Scripture any *warrant* for partaking of it. At the time when the Lord instituted this ordinance, only his chosen disciples were with him. He sat down *with the twelve.*[1] He took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it *to the disciples.* It was to them he said, "Take, eat; this is my body;" and likewise, "Drink ye all of it."[2] It was to them he said, "This do in remembrance of me."[3]

The question whether or not *Judas* was present, and partook of the bread and the wine, does not seem to me to have any serious importance. If he was present and partook, it was in the character of a disciple, regarded as such by the other

[1] Matt. xxvi. 20. [2] vs. 26, 27. [3] Luke xxii. 19.

disciples, and not yet disowned as such by his Master. If he did not partake, but went out before the Supper was instituted, which I regard as the more probable view, then this circumstance may be considered as an additional confirmation of the truth that this observance was designed by the Lord to be limited to his avowed disciples.[1]

Invariably, wherever the Lord's Supper is spoken of or alluded to, those who are represented as partaking of it, if not explicitly declared to be disciples of Christ, are plainly assumed to be such, and to partake as such.[2] This is very emphatically the case with the references to this ordinance in the tenth and eleventh chapters of the first epistle to the Corinthians. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we

1 The order of the narrative in Luke xxii. 19-23, is in favor of placing his departure *after* the institution of the supper. But the giving of the sop, the sign by which he was declared to be the betrayer of Christ, seems to belong more fitly to the *Paschal* Supper, and is referred to in connection with it by both Matthew (xxvi. 21) and Mark (xiv. 20). And John says (xiii. 30) that Judas went out *immediately* after this sign was given. It seems to me that these indications of the order of events in three of the gospels, especially the very definite one the gospel of John, are more decisive than the order of the narrative in Luke. It is well known that the evangelists do not always *record* events in the exact order of their *occurrence*.

2 See Acts ii. 42.

break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"[1] This is surely a very emphatic way of saying, that this rite implies, on the part of those who observe it, fellowship with Christ, and a participation of the benefits of his propitiatory sacrifice on the cross for us. The whole representation in the eleventh chapter is of a kindred character. The warning against eating and drinking unworthily,[2] the injunction to examine themselves,[3] and the distinction expressly recognized between those who partake and the world,[4] manifestly presuppose the character of discipleship on the part of the communicants. Indeed, as the epistle is formally inscribed to those who are recognized as disciples of Christ,[5] whatever directions it contains in regard to the observance of the Lord's Supper are naturally understood as applicable and addressed to persons of this character.

That such an avowal, express or implied, is an indispensable qualification for approach to the Lord's table, will hardly be denied by any but those who regard this ordinance as a means of grace to the unconverted. This view prevails generally in the unreformed churches, both the

1 Ch. x. 16. 2 vs. 27, 29. 3 v. 28. 4 v. 32. 5 Ch. i. 2.

Latin and the Greek. It prevails also to a considerable extent, I believe, among Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Methodists. It did prevail, also, as is well known, among the Congregationalists of New England before the days of Jonathan Edwards. In proportion as evangelical views are entertained in regard to the nature of regeneration and discipleship, this position must be abandoned. In proportion as regeneration is held to be a *gradual* process, the development of a germ of natural goodness in man, or of divine grace implanted in baptism, this position will be retained. Yet the Episcopalian, who exhorts the people to repent of their sins, or else not come to that holy table, and who tells them it is requisite that no man should come but with a full trust in God's mercy, and with a quiet conscience;[1] the Presbyterian, who insists on the desire to renounce sin, and the determination to lead a godly life;[2] and the Methodist, who admits into the preparatory class only those who profess to be seeking salvation;[3]—all require in substance some avowal of incipient discipleship, as we might call it, such as *their* views of regeneration

[1] Book of Common Prayer. [2] Directory for Worship. [3] Book of Discipline.

and conversion warrant. But strictly *evangelical* Pedobaptists, with whom we have chiefly to deal in the present controversy, agree with us in regarding the Lord's Supper as designed only for the avowed disciples of Christ. Yet I cannot forbear to remark, in passing, that I see no consistent ground on which those who regard *Baptism* as a means of grace to the unconverted, as I suppose all consistent Pedobaptists do, can object to the views of those who regard the Lord's Supper in the same light.

II.

BAPTISM.

In addition to a general avowal of being disciples of Christ, I mention *baptism*, as a second qualification required, according to the Scriptures, in all communicants at the Lord's table.

There is no record of the baptism of any of the twelve, or eleven, disciples who partook with Jesus at the original institution of the Lord's Supper. But we have proof that one or two of

them had been disciples of John.[1] It is probable, that *all* of them had been; for our Lord would not be likely to choose his apostles from among those who had not obeyed the call to repentance, and received the baptism, of that illustrious harbinger, who was sent before him on purpose to prepare the way of the Lord.[2] This inference is greatly strengthened by the circumstance, that the twelve administered baptism to others, very soon after they became disciples of Jesus.[3] But while there can be, I think, no reasonable doubt that all the twelve apostles had been baptized by John, yet we have no occasion now to insist upon this; nor need our present inquiry be embarrassed by any doubts as to the question whether the baptism of John was essentially *Christian* baptism. It is plain that the *first* administrator of baptism must have been *unbaptized.* It matters little who the first administrator of *Christian* baptism was, — whether John the Baptist, or one of the twelve apostles, — provided only that he had a *divine commission* to perform it, and to prescribe the qualifications of those who should receive it. Such a divine commission the apos-

1 Jno. i. 35–42. 2 Isai. xl. 3. 3 Jno. iii 22; iv. 12.

tles certainly had from Christ himself, in regard to both Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and this commission supersedes the *necessity*, though it does not exclude the *fitness*, of any other qualification.

In proof of the position, that no unbaptized person is duly qualified to be a communicant at the Lord's table, we appeal to the examples of Scripture, and to the nature and import of the two ordinances, as therein described.

THE EXAMPLES OF SCRIPTURE.

The Lord's Supper is much less frequently mentioned and referred to in the Scriptures than Baptism is; but wherever it is mentioned or referred to, it is in a way which accords with the view that it is a duty and a privilege belonging to those who have previously been baptized. There is no instance, after its first institution, of any persons partaking of it, concerning whom we have not good reason to believe that they had been first baptized. There is nothing to favor the view that it ought to be, or properly may be, under any circumstances, observed by

those who have not been baptized. Those of whom it is recorded, that "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in *breaking of bread*, and in prayers," had just before been baptized.[1]

Those Corinthian disciples, to whom the apostle gave directions in regard to the Lord's Supper, were *baptized* disciples. While he rejoiced, for a particular reason which he is careful to specify, that *he* had baptized but few among them, yet he speaks of them all as baptized. "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"[2]

And when it is said of the disciples at Troas,[3] that they came together to break bread, we are justified in assuming that they had been previously baptized, in view of the plain doctrine and uniform precedents of Scripture, by which the proper place of baptism is fixed at the beginning of the Christian life, as the primal act of submission to Christ's authority, and the formal declaration of faith in him.

This statement introduces our second medium of proof, namely: —

1 Acts ii. 41, 42. 2 1 Cor. i. 13.

2 The word "disciples," in Acts xx. 7, is indeed omitted by the best editors of the Greek Testament; but it is implied in the word "them."

THE NATURE AND IMPORT OF THE TWO ORDINANCES.

The character and meaning of each of these symbolical rites, and the relation between them, as exhibited in the Scriptures, require that Baptism should always precede the reception of the Lord's Supper.

The commission which Jesus gave to the apostles to baptize plainly intimates that baptism was the rite by which those who became his disciples were to declare themselves such, and to unite themselves to the company of believers, to be instructed in all subsequent Christian duties. "Go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."[1] "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved."[2] From the very terms of this commission, from the place which baptism here occupies, and the distinction which it defines, it appears evident

[1] Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. [2] Mark xvi. 15, 16.

that this rite stands appropriately at the *beginning* of the Christian life (not at the beginning of the *natural* life, but at the beginning of the *Christian* life), as the introduction to a course of obedience to whatever else Christ has commanded.

The examples of baptism recorded in the book of Acts all agree with this view. On the day of Pentecost, they that gladly received the word preached by Peter were immediately baptized.[1] So it was with those in Samaria who believed what Philip preached.[2] So it was with the Ethiopian eunuch.[3] So it was with Paul, when he received the word with joy at the mouth of Ananias.[4] So it was with Cornelius the centurion and his friends, when they believed those things which Peter preached, and had received the Holy Spirit.[5] So it was with Lydia, when her heart was opened to attend to the things which Paul spake;[6] and with the jailer in the same city, whose heart was opened in a manner so different.[7] So it was with Crispus and his family, and many other Corinthians with them.[8]

Acts ii. 38, 41. 2 viii. 12. 3 viii. 35, 38. 4 ix. 17, 18; xxii. 16.
5 x. 47, 48. 6 xvi. 14, 15. 7 vs. 29–33. 8 xviii. 8.

So it was universally. Baptism always followed immediately, as the first duty after the exercise of saving faith. There is a plain concurrence of all scriptural precedents in this matter. In no case is it said, "then they that gladly received the word came together to break bread;" or, "who can forbid bread and wine, that these should not eat the Lord's Supper, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" or, "believing in God with all his house, he sat down at the table of the Lord, he and all his straightway;" or, "repent, and receive the Lord's Supper, every one of you;" or, "when they believed the preaching concerning the kingdom of God, they broke bread, both men and women." In no case are they described as receiving the Lord's Supper immediately after their conversion, or as receiving the Lord's Supper first, and baptism afterwards. Can this be accidental? or is it significant of the Lord's will? There is *one order* uniformly intimated and observed in Scripture: there is no intimation that we are at liberty to *change* it; there is no intimation that it is a matter of indifference. We have no right to

change that order; we have no warrant for regarding it as indifferent.

The manner in which baptism is referred to in the Epistles confirms the view that it should always precede the reception of the Lord's Supper. In Rom. vi. 3–6, it is represented as a symbol of dying to sin, and rising to a new and holy life. The same representation is found more briefly exhibited in Colossians ii. 12. In Gal. iii. 26, 27, baptism is represented as the putting on of Christ, and as intimately connected with that saving faith in him by which we become children of God.

The passages in which baptism is closely coupled with regeneration and salvation may be pertinently referred to here. They are, John iii. 21; Acts xxii. 16; Titus iii. 5; and 1 Peter iii. 21. These passages, which have proved very troublesome to the commentators, are easily explained when baptism is regarded as occupying its legitimate and scriptural position, as the closely following declaration, and appointed sign of manifestation to men, of that inward spiritual change which is indispensable to salvation.

In all the above Scriptures, the position of

baptism is such, that there is *no room*, so to speak, for the communion of the Lord's Supper to precede it.

The difference between Baptism, as a rite to be administered once for all, and the Lord's Supper, as an observance to be *often repeated*, is moreover an expressive intimation of the proper relative position of the two. That Baptism should be placed *last*, after the Lord's Supper has been received many times during a course of years, would be manifestly at variance with all that the Scriptures say of its nature and meaning, no less than with all scriptural precedents. That it should have its place somewhere, anywhere, in the midst of oft-repeated communions, would be still more incongruous in itself, and equally contrary to all the examples of the New Testament.

We prove that Baptism should precede the Lord's Supper, then, by the same uniform agreement of Scripture precedents by which we prove that repentance, faith, and regeneration, should precede baptism.

PEDOBAPTIST TESTIMONIES.

In regard to this point, the agreement is very general among all denominations of Christians. Even those who do not admit that repentance and faith should always precede baptism, maintain that baptism should always precede the communion. I cite a few emphatic testimonials on this point.—Baxter says: "What man dare go in a way which hath neither precept nor example to warrant it, from a way that hath a full current of both? Yet they that will admit members into the visible church without baptism do so." [1]

Dr. Wall says: "No church ever gave the communion to any persons before they were baptized. Among all the absurdities that ever were held, none ever maintained *that*, that any person should partake of the communion before he was baptized." [2]

Dr. Doddridge confirms this testimony: "It is certain that as far as our knowledge of antiquity reaches, no unbaptized person received the Lord's Supper. How excellent soever any man's charac-

1 Plain Scripture Proof of Infant Baptism, in reply to Mr. Tombes, page 24.

2 Hist. of Inf. Bap., Part ii. ch. ix.

ter is, he must be baptized before he can be looked upon as completely a member of the church of Christ." [1]

So says Dr. Dwight: "It is an indispensable qualification for this ordinance, that the candidate for communion be a member of the visible church of Christ in full standing. By this I intend that he should be a person of piety; that he should have made a public profession of religion; and that he should have been baptized." [2]

Dr. Griffin says: "We ought not to commune with those who are not baptized, and of course are not church members, even if we regard them as Christians. There is such a relationship established between the two ordinances, that I have no right to separate them; in other words, I have no right to send the sacred elements out of the church." [3]

Dr. Hibbard, a recognized authority among Methodists, says: "Both Baptist and Pedobaptist churches agree in rejecting from communion at the table of the Lord, and in denying the right of church fellowship, to all who have not been

1 Lectures, pp. 511, 512. 2 Serm. 160, vol. iv. pp. 365-6.
3 Letter on Communion, published in 1829.

baptized. Valid baptism they consider essential to visible church membership. This also we hold." [1]

In fact, there is hardly any point on which there has been a more unanimous agreement of all churches, ancient and modern, than on the one now under consideration. We might quote from Justin Martyr, from the Apostolical Constitutions, and from a long line of ancient witnesses. But as the emphatic statements of Dr. Wall and Dr. Doddridge have never, so far as we know, been challenged, it is unnecessary to confirm them.

Yet individuals have arisen, at different times and in different sects, who have denied the necessity of baptism as a prerequisite to the communion. Among these, there is none abler or more widely known than the eloquent English Baptist, Robert Hall.

ROBERT HALL'S VIEW.

It is fair to state his views in his own language. "There is no position in the whole compass of

[1] Hibbard on Baptism, p. 174.

theology," he says, in the Preface to his work on the "Terms of Communion," "of the truth of which I feel a stronger persuasion, than that no man, or set of men, are entitled to prescribe, as an indispensable condition of communion, what the New Testament has not enjoined as a condition of salvation. To establish this position is the principal object of the following work; and though it is more immediately occupied in the discussion of a case which respects the Baptists and Pedobaptists, that case is attempted to be decided *entirely* upon the principle now maintained, and is no more than the application of it to a particular instance."[1] In another place, he states it as his "*leading position*, that no church has a right to establish *terms of communion which are not terms of salvation*."[2] Again he says, communion with Pedobaptists "neither implies that they are baptized, nor the contrary; it has no retrospective view to that ordinance whatever; it implies neither more nor less than that they are members of Christ, and the objects, consequently, of that fraternal attachment which our opponents themselves profess to feel."[3] "We cheerfully re-

1 Works, vol i. p. 285, Gregory's edition. 2 Ibid. p. 359. 3 p. 354

ceive pious Pedobaptists, not from the supposition that the ceremony which they underwent in their infancy possesses the smallest validity, but as sincere followers of Christ: and for my own part, I should feel as little hesitation in admitting such as deny the perpetuity of baptism, whenever the evidence of their piety is equally clear and decisive."[1] Once more, in his reply to Mr. Kinghorn, he says, "he justly observes, that the question, and the only question, is, whether those who are *acknowledged to be unbaptized ought to come to the Lord's table.*"[2]

Nothing can be plainer, then, than that Mr. Hall's *whole argument* is founded on the principle, that baptism, as not being an indispensable term of salvation, cannot properly be made an indispensable term of communion.

OBJECTIONS TO HIS PRINCIPLE.

In regard to this fundamental principle of Mr. Hall's argument,

1. I remark, in the first place, that a principle so contrary to the creeds and the customs of all

1 Works, vol. i. p. 405. 2 p. 401.

churches, ancient and modern, needs to be demonstrated by very plain and sure evidence. A very heavy burden of proof rests on him who undertakes to establish a proposition so contrary to what has been universally received.

2. A second objection to Mr. Hall's principle is, that it assumes a false and unscriptural inequality between the two Christian rites. It assumes that the Lord's Supper holds altogether a higher rank than Baptism; that it is more intimately connected with union and charity, discipleship and salvation; that its omission is a much graver matter than the omission of baptism; that it is comparatively unessential whether all true disciples are baptized or not, but very essential that they should all partake of the communion, and that they should, as far as opportunity allows, all partake of it together. Now we find no scriptural warrant for asserting or supposing any such inferiority of the one rite to the other. Both derive their sacredness and obligation from the same divine source; both represent substantially the same great facts; both presuppose the same relation of the individual soul to Christ, the same spiritual qualifications in those who

receive them. He who said, "Do this in remembrance of me," said also, "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." If in the Lord's Supper we show forth symbolically the death of Christ on the cross, so are we in baptism baptized into his death, and symbolically buried with him. If the Communion expresses our personal participation of Christ as the Bread of Life, so have we who have been baptized into Christ *put on* Christ. It is not strange that those who are accustomed to administer baptism to unconscious babes should regard it as less sacred and essential than the Communion. But neither the Scriptures, nor the principles and practices of Baptists, furnish any reason for attributing any more sacred character, or any more religious importance, to the Lord's Supper than to Baptism. Instead of saying, with Mr. Hall, that "no church has a right to establish terms of *Communion* which are not terms of salvation," it would be much nearer the truth of Scripture to say, that "no church has a right to establish terms of *Baptism* which are not terms of salvation." For it is Baptism, and not the Communion, which is

most frequently and emphatically connected in the Scriptures with the things that accompany salvation.

3. A third objection to Mr. Hall's principle is, that it tends to do away with baptism entirely. We do not believe that baptism is indispensable to admission into heaven; but we do believe that it is the only proper door of entrance into the *visible* church, and therefore indispensable to qualify a person to partake of the Lord's Supper, as a privilege and duty *in* the church. But if it is not indispensable to this latter, if the highest privilege of church membership may be legitimately enjoyed by him who neglects it, then what is its importance? Mr. Hall virtually admits that his view tends to make it of small account, when he says he should have no hesitation in receiving to the Communion those who deny the perpetuity of baptism.

4. Indeed, the tendency of this principle seems to me to be more destructive still, and to tend to do away with the visible church altogether. I name this, therefore, as a fourth objection to Mr. Hall's view. If nothing is essential to membership in the visible church but what is essential to

membership in the invisible, then any particular visible church can only be conceived of as a *part* of the church invisible, and as differing from it only as a part differs from the whole. Indeed, Mr. Hall distinctly takes just this ground. But when we attempt to carry out this theory of the visible church, we find that it is utterly impracticable. It is like attempting to conceive of a concrete abstraction. Nothing but a "poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling," can "glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven," with sufficient rapidity to catch this unsubstantial vision; nothing but a poet's imagination can "body forth the form of" this "thing unknown;" and not even the "poet's pen" can "give" to this "airy nothing a local habitation." The visible church has all at once become invisible. To speak soberly, no church ever did, or ever could, manage its affairs, or even exist as a church, on this theory. Such a church must not require the convert to be baptized, nor to partake of the Lord's Supper, nor to submit to its discipline; for none of these are terms of salvation. It would certainly be impossible for any church, consistently with this theory, to exercise discipline, or even to know

who its own members were; for as soon as any visible act, ceremony, or form, is made essential to admission into it, or membership in it, then it violates the law of its being, by establishing terms of membership which are not terms of salvation. It is very true that a scripturally constituted church will aim to receive to its membership only such as are in its judgment already members of the invisible church, and heirs of salvation; but it belongs to the very nature of a visible church, to require, in addition to those spiritual qualifications which constitute membership in the invisible, some *visible* mark of membership; and this must of course be something that is not indispensable to salvation.

Mr. Hall says, "No church has a right to establish terms of communion which are not terms of salvation." We say that no church has a right to establish *any* terms of communion, merely on its own authority; but whatever terms the *Lord* has established, these every church is bound to abide by; with these no church has a right to dispense; no church has any more right to make them broader and easier, than it has to make them narrower and stricter.

It seems to me that, under the form in which Mr. Hall states his principle, there lurks a treacherous proof of its unsoundness.

But, sound or unsound, such is incontestably and avowedly his principle. The basis, as he explicitly declares, of his whole argument is, that no church has a right to require baptism as an indispensable prerequisite to the communion; for certainly Mr. Hall did not regard baptism as indispensable to salvation. If that foundation is taken away, the whole fabric of his argument falls to the ground. Hence, those who do not agree with him in that "*leading position*" are not entitled to avail themselves of any of his arguments against strict communion. They cannot do so consistently, unless they are able to show that he did not well understand his own reasoning, and that he was mistaken when he affirmed that it rested *entirely* upon that axiom. Yet, in spite of this obvious reflection, we all know how common it is for both Baptists and Pedobaptists to avail themselves freely of his arguments, his expressions, and his authority on this controverted subject, while they do not, either in practice or in theory,

admit the soundness of the foundation on which his whole argument is built. If now, after all, any should say that the evidence on this point does not appear to them to be such as to *compel* conviction, — that they are not quite *sure* that baptism ought always to precede the participation of the Lord's Supper, we answer, that they ought to be quite sure of the *contrary* before they invite to the communion those whom they do not regard as baptized.

III.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

Intimately connected with both the foregoing, yet not quite identical with either, is that which we consider as a third prerequisite in every candidate for communion at the Lord's table, namely, *church membership*.

Ordinarily, and regularly, this is implied in baptism. This rite is appropriately the door of entrance into the visible church; and though it may be, and ought to be, administered in some cases where there is yet no visible church in

existence, yet, where such a church does exist, baptism is the only regular and scriptural door of entrance into it. And as baptism comes properly at the beginning of the Christian life, and introduces the disciple into the church, it follows that the communion of the Lord's Supper is for those who are *in the church.* This view is generally admitted even by those who practise infant baptism, in spite of the inconvenient consequences which, on their principles, manifestly result from it. We have seen, in the testimonies quoted under the former division, how inseparably visible church membership connected itself with baptism, in the thoughts and expressions of those who were treating of the latter subject. It was impossible to cite their testimony in regard to *baptism* as prerequisite to the communion, without citing at the same time a similar testimony in regard to church membership. According to these concurrent testimonies, any person who is not a member of any visible church is by that fact disqualified, or, more properly speaking, *un*qualified to receive the Lord's Supper. We have only to inquire, therefore, whether

they are correct in this view. Is the Lord's Supper represented in the Scriptures as a *church* privilege, for the right observance of which the church, as such, is responsible to Christ? If he designed it to be celebrated *in* the church, and *by* the church, then, of course, on scriptural principles, it belongs only to the members of the church to participate in it.

If we recur to the original institution of this rite, we find that the first observance of it was confined to the immediate companions of Jesus, to those whom he had, nearly three years before, chosen to be with him,[1] who were united as one company of worshippers, under his instruction and guidance. There were doubtless many other disciples of Christ in Jerusalem at the time; but none except the twelve were so united into one community as to be a fit representation of a church. While, then, the twelve apostles, as commissioned by Christ to preach and baptize, represent the gospel *ministry*, as a perpetual succession of officers in the church, they may also, as a company of fellow-worshippers, as a visible community of the disciples of Christ,

[1] Mark iii. 14.

no less fitly be regarded as representing a *church.* It certainly was not in the former of these two characters that they alone received the consecrated symbols of Christ's broken body and shed blood; that would be to suppose that only the ministers of Christ have a right to partake of these emblems. It must have been rather in the latter character, as representing a visible church, that they alone were allowed to partake of the bread and the wine.

This view is in harmony with all the subsequent scriptural notices of the ordinance in question. It is always represented as a *social* observance, to be celebrated by the church collectively.

When we read of the baptism of single individuals, as of Paul and the Ethiopian eunuch, there is never any intimation that the administration of the Lord's Supper followed. Even when whole households are baptized, as in the case of Lydia, the Philippian jailer, and Crispus at Corinth, the same silence is observed. But when great numbers were baptized, as on the day of Pentecost, we find them soon after joining in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. And observe how these communicants are character-

ized: they are those who "continued steadfastly in the apostles' *doctrine and fellowship*, and in *breaking of bread*, and in *prayers*." The concomitants of the participation of the Lord's Supper, as here specified, are just the marks by which a church is characterized. These communicants have just been *baptized:* they form a *community* or *fellowship*, receiving together the *instructions* of their apostolic pastors, and *worshipping* together in *prayer*. A community of baptized believers, under common instruction, and united in worship, — what is it but a church of Christ? Indeed, it is expressly called by this name, only a few verses further on. "And the Lord added to the *church* daily such as should be saved." And after this record of their breaking bread together, they are habitually spoken of as "the church," "the church at Jerusalem."[1]

In the twentieth chapter of Acts we have an account of the administration of the Lord's Supper by the apostle Paul to the disciples at Troas. They came together upon the first day of the week to break bread.[2] Paul preached a sermon to them, and then broke bread to them.[3]

1 Acts v. 11; viii. 1; xi. 22; xv. 4. 2 Verse 7. 3 v. 11.

The ordinance is here represented as a stated observance of the company of disciples at Troas, a part of that public worship of God for the maintenance of which the church was constituted, and is responsible. It has been questioned, I know, whether there was at this time any church at Troas.[1] But I do not see how there can be any reasonable doubt on that point. This was Paul's *third* visit to that important city. Both his former visits, indeed, were shorter than he intended, — his departure being hastened, in the first instance, by the vision that called him over into Macedonia,[2] and in the second by his impatient desire to meet his brother Titus.[3] But he tells us, in reference to this second visit, that when he went there "to preach Christ's gospel," "a door was opened unto him by the Lord." Is it probable, then, that nearly a year later, after he had fully preached the gospel through Macedonia,

1 A writer in the *Christian Review* for April, 1853, in an article on Weekly Communion, attempts to establish the conclusion that there was no church at Troas at this time. But his argument does not seem to me conclusive. It is founded mainly on the omission of any definite mention of the church at Troas; but the supposition which the author makes to explain the reason for celebrating the Lord's Supper is quite as destitute of positive support as that of the existence of a church there, and, as it seems to me, far less probable in itself.

2 Acts xvi. 8-11. 3 2 Cor. ii. 12, 13.

and round about unto Illyricum, and had remained three months in Greece, there was still no church founded in Troas when he came there the third time? — especially as this was the place of rendezvous selected by him and those Macedonian brethren who had gone on before him. We feel justified in assuming that there was a church at Troas before this third visit of Paul, when he broke bread to them.[1]

The manner in which Paul speaks of the Lord's Supper in his first epistle to the Corinthians, confirms the view that it is to be celebrated in the church, and as a church ordinance. In the eleventh chapter he uses such expressions as these: "When ye come together in church;"[2] "when ye come together into one place;"[3] "to eat the Lord's Supper;"[4] and their coming together in the church to eat this sacred

1 Compare Acts xx. 2-5 with Rom. xv. 12. See also Conybeare and Howson's Life and Epistles of St. Paul, vol. i. pp. 281-285, vol. ii. pp. 90-92 and p. 206. The opinion expressed in this work is that Paul, on his second visit, remained there several weeks (ii. 91), and laid the foundation of a church, which rapidly increased (pp. 91, 92).

2 Verse 18. The omission of the article in the original is significant. It makes the language equivalent to our phrase, "As a church," or, if the critics will pardon the expression, "In a church capacity."

3 v. 20. 4 v. 33.

feast is distinctly contrasted with their more private eating at home.[1] The tenor of the whole passage is in perfect harmony with the inscription at the beginning of the epistle, in which it is addressed, not to individual Christians, as such, but "to the *church* of God which is at Corinth."[2]

THE LORD'S SUPPER A SYMBOL OF CHURCH FELLOWSHIP.

In the tenth chapter, the apostle seems to go still further, and to intimate that this ordinance is a *symbol of church fellowship* between those who partake of it together: "for we, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread."[3] A more literal rendering of his language, not requiring any such supplementary words (*being, and*) as our translators have inserted in italics, would be, "because there is one loaf, we, the many, are one body; for we all partake of the one loaf." Here we understand the Lord's Supper to be represented as an expressive symbol of church fellow-

[1] vs. 22, 34. [2] v. 2. [3] v. 17.

ship, and consequently not to be properly shared except by those who are actually united in church relations, or, at most, by those between whom no obstacle to union in such relations exists.

Such is unquestionably the view which, as a matter of fact, men in general entertain of the communion. They look upon it as one of the chief and readiest marks of distinction between those who are *within* the church and those who are *without*. From seeing who approach the Lord's table, and who refrain, they infer at once who are walking in fellowship with the church, and who are not.

And, in fact, what else is implied in excommunication as an act of church discipline? If the joint participation of the Lord's Supper is not a symbol of church fellowship, then the exclusion of any person from that participation is not an expression of disfellowship. Neither does the withdrawal of church fellowship, on this supposition, necessarily imply an exclusion from this participation: and therefore an excluded member might, without impropriety, continue to come to the Lord's table as before. Why should he not, if his coming imports nothing more than his personal

commemoration of the death of Christ? Thus that exclusion from the participation of the Lord's Supper, which is understood, by universal consent, to be involved in the highest act of church discipline, is a virtual admission that communion in this ordinance, whatever else it may import or imply, is also a sign of church fellowship, — of that distinct and peculiar agreement and union of views and feelings, which is, or should be, the determining consideration in fixing the denominational and ecclesiastical position of each believer in Christ. If, when we are bidden to withdraw ourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, this withdrawal includes a separation from him in the rite which commemorates the death of Christ, then union in that rite must be at least one of the symbols by which church fellowship is expressed. Can any other act be named which expresses that fellowship so distinctly and so fully?

We conclude, in view of all the above considerations, that membership in a Christian church is a scriptural term of admission to the Lord's Supper; and that those only can suitably *unite* in this

observance between whom church relations do actually, or may properly, exist.

This connection between church membership and the right to the Lord's Supper is in effect denied by those who maintain that this rite, apart from its commemorative character, is symbolical simply and solely of the fellowship between the soul of each communicant and Christ, and not at all of mutual and church fellowship between the communicants. This view takes off from the church at once all responsibility in regard to the character of those who come to the Lord's table. It makes each individual the sole judge of his qualification for the enjoyment of this privilege within the church. It makes exclusion from the Communion, instead of being a legitimate and severe penalty resulting from the highest act of church discipline, to be at the same time a theoretical usurpation and a practical nullity.

OBJECTION ANSWERED.

But it is objected to the view which makes the participation of the Lord's Supper a symbol of mutual fellowship between the communicants,

that it tends to foster an admitted evil in our churches, namely, the practice of staying away from the Communion on account of personal differences with other communicants, or want of confidence in their Christian character, or, at least, want of Christian fellowship with them for the time being. It is certainly desirable to find a remedy for this evil. But we do not think that remedy ought to be sought in the denial that the Lord's Supper is symbolical of mutual and church fellowship between those who partake of it; because we think that would be a denial of the truth. There is, indeed, no definite allusion to this import of the rite in the words of our Lord at its original institution. But we think the passage cited from the First Epistle to the Corinthians[1] does attribute to it such an import, and that in fact it results from the indissoluble connection between fellowship with Christ and fellowship with one another, that the rite which primarily expresses the first should also include the expression of the second. This connection is plainly set forth in the first chapter of the First Epistle of John. "That which we have seen and

[1] x. 17.

heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."[1] "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another."[2] We think, therefore, that there is scriptural reason for that almost universal view which is taken of this ordinance, as expressive of the mutual confidence and affection of those that participate in it. And if this be so, the remedy for the evil, which we all admit and lament, must be sought for in some other way than in the denial of this secondary import of the Lord's Supper. Nor will it be difficult, I think, to show the impropriety of absenting one's self from the Communion for such a cause, on grounds perfectly consistent with the doctrine here maintained. While the *church* as a body see no reason for withdrawing their fellowship from the person objected to, it does not belong to the individual objector to overrule the collective judgment of the whole. If the objector's feelings towards the person objected to are such as unfit him to come to the Lord's table, the sooner he is rid of them the better.

1 v. 3. 2 v. 7.

Besides, it well deserves to be considered, whether the proposed way of remedying the evil in question, even if it were lawful to have recourse to it, would not be worse than the evil which it seeks to cure. Would it not be likely to result in making churches altogether *too* patient of differences and alienations, and altogether too indifferent to the harmony and love that should subsist among their members?

SUPPOSED PRIMITIVE LAXITY.

The necessity of church membership as a qualification for the Communion is sometimes questioned on such grounds as the following: Christianity is pre-eminently spiritual in its nature, and personal in its application; the spirit of the New Testament is opposed to all formalism,—it is a spirit of freedom; and the apostles and primitive Christians seem to have laid little stress on outward ordinances and ecclesiastical organization. In obedience to this spirit, when the disciples of Christ came together, they probably united in celebrating the Lord's Supper, without any for-

mal investigation or inquiry as to each one's baptism or church membership. We must not transfer our present views to primitive times, and attribute to the apostolical churches all that regularity and routine with which we are familiar.

In opposition to this view of the laxity of the primitive Christians in regard to external rites and church organization, there are several important considerations to be urged.

Supposing, in the first place, that this is the true view of the teachings of the New Testament, and of the spirit of the primitive disciples, the inquiry naturally arises, Why is not the same principle applicable to *both* ordinances? Why were they not just as lax in regard to the observance of the Lord's Supper as in regard to baptism and church membership? Baptism is no more an outward rite than the Lord's Supper. Certainly, the Scripture insists *more* upon the importance of the former rite than of the latter, and connects it more intimately with the things that accompany salvation.

But is the tenor of the New Testament teaching such as the above objectors represent? That such is, very extensively, the spirit of the *present*

age, is sufficiently apparent; but whether or not it is the spirit of apostolical Christianity, is a matter to be determined by no hasty inference from the spiritual and personal character of the religion of Christ, but by a careful examination of the Scriptures. It is readily granted that they are not very full in their testimony, nor minute and circumstantial in their details, in regard to matters pertaining to church order. But we must remember how brief and elliptical their historical records are, and not require on this subject a kind and degree of evidence incompatible with the nature and limits of the inspired volume. We must carefully survey the entire tenor of the teachings of the New Testament, and remembering that many things must be supposed which are not recorded, we must observe what is the general bearing of its testimony on the question before us. Confessedly we have but *indications* to guide us, rather than specific rules. Which way do the indexes point, — towards laxity, or towards strictness?

PROMINENCE OF THE CHURCH RELATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

In answer to this inquiry, something may be learned from the different manner in which the followers of Christ are most frequently designated in different parts of the New Testament. The names chiefly used to designate them in their *individual* character and relation to their Lord are "disciples" and "saints"; in their personal relation one to another they are called "brethren"; and in their associated and organized relation they are spoken of as "churches." The word "disciples" is applied to them about two hundred and thirty times in the Gospels, about thirty times in the Acts, and not once in the Epistles. The word "saints" is used to designate them not more than once, if at all, in the Gospels,[1] only four or five times in the Acts, and about fifty-five times in the Epistles. The word "brethren," expressive of the mutual relation of Christians, and at the same time suggestive of their union into a society or brotherhood, is found

1 Matt. xxvii. 52, where it is more naturally referred to the saints of the Old Testament.

in this application about fifteen times in the Gospels, about thirty times in the Acts, and more than one hundred times in the Epistles. It is used in the latter nearly twice as often as the word "saints." But how is it with the word "churches"? We should not, of course, expect to find this word common in the Gospels; and in fact we do not meet with it at all except in Matthew, where it is used three times.[1] In the Acts it occurs about twenty times, and in the Epistles about ninety times. It appears from this comparison that, in the later writings of the New Testament, the followers of Christ are spoken of collectively as churches nearly as often as they are designated as brethren, and much oftener than they are called by any other name, expressive merely of their individual character. This seems to me to show a marked prominence given in the apostolic writings to the ecclesiastical organization of the disciples of Christ.

Of the fourteen Epistles of Paul, four are addressed to individuals, and not to a company of disciples;[2] one is without any inscription;[3] and

[1] xvi. 18; xviii. 17, twice. [2] 1 and 2 Tim. Titus, Philemon. [3] Hebrews.

of the remaining nine, five are inscribed expressly to churches,[1] the other four to the saints in the places to which they were sent.[2]

In the Apocalypse, John addresses himself to the churches in his introduction;[3] and the Lord addresses his seven messages of counsel, reproof, and encouragement, to the churches of Asia. It is the message of his Spirit to the churches, which all who have ears are admonished to regard.[4] And the churches, with their pastors, are distinctly individualized, and distinguished from each other, under the emblems of the candlesticks and the stars.

In many cases, in Acts and in the Epistles, the churches are explicitly mentioned, where we should more naturally expect some term descriptive of individuals. It was to the church that the Lord added daily such as should be saved.[5] It is against the church that a great persecution arises.[6] It is the churches that have rest when the persecution is over.[7] It is with the church that Paul and Barnabas assemble themselves a whole year at Antioch, where the disciples were

1 1 and 2 Cor., Gal., 1 and 2 Thess. 2 Rom., Ephes., Phil., Coloss. 3 i. 4.
4 ii. 7, 11, 17, 29 : iii. 6, 13, 22. 5 Acts ii. 47. 6 viii. 1. 7 ix. 31.

first called Christians.[1] It is by the church that these two and their companions are brought on their way when they go up from Antioch to Jerusalem, to consult the apostles and elders about circumcision.[2] It is the church that receives them, with the apostles and elders, when they arrive there.[3] And it is the whole church that unite with the apostles and elders in sending the decision back to Antioch and the neighboring regions. And when Paul goes with Silas to revisit the scenes of his former labors, his errand is to confirm the churches.[4] These are but a few specimens out of many in which prominence is given to the name which expresses the ecclesiastical organization of the primitive disciples.

THE WORD "CHURCH" NOT USED LOOSELY.

And there are many indications that this word "church" was not used loosely to denote the aggregate of believers in any particular place, but that it expresses a definite and pervading organization. Paul and Barnabas were set apart

1 xi. 26. 2 xv. 3. 3 xv. 4. 4 xv. 41

to their missionary work by the church at Antioch;[1] in the prosecution of their work they ordained elders in every church;[2] and when they returned to Antioch they assembled the church to hear the report of their labors.[3] When Paul had not time to visit Ephesus, as he wished, he sent for the elders of that church to meet him at Miletus.[4]

We have seen above that the elders of the church at Jerusalem are repeatedly spoken of. The same officers are mentioned under the same name, or under that of bishops, by Paul, in his Epistles to the Philippians,[5] to Timothy,[6] and to Titus,[7] and also by James[8] and by Peter.[9] The scattered notices of the pecuniary contributions among the early Christians are such as imply a distinct church organization, and definite church action on this particular subject. The apostle gives a specific direction to the church at Corinth, in regard to the manner of making collections; and he tells them that he had given the same order to the churches of Galatia.[10] Again he writes to them, in regard to his refusal to

1 Acts xiii. 1-3. 2 xiv. 23. 3 xiv. 27. 4 xx. 17, 28.
5 i. 10. 6 1 Ep. iii. 1, 2; v. 17. 7 i. 5, 7. 8 v. 14.
9 1 Pet. v. i. 10 1 Cor. xvi. 1.

receive from them any compensation for his labors, "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them to do you service."[1] He speaks also of messengers chosen by the churches to convey their contributions to their destined objects.[2] He writes to the Philippians that, during a certain period of his ministry, no church communicated with him, as concerning giving and receiving, but they only.[3] We read, moreover, of letters of commendation,[4] and of a register of those widows who were supported by the church.[5] The immoral person in the church at Corinth was excluded by the vote of many, and afterwards restored.[6]

UNIFORMITY IN PRIMITIVE CHURCH USAGES.

There are remarkable indications, too, of regularity and uniformity in matters of church action and discipline. We have seen an example of this in the matter of collections. The apostle Paul sends Timothy to Corinth to bring the disciples there into remembrance of his ways,

1 2 Cor. xi. 8. 2 viii. 19–23. 3 iv. 15.
4 2 Cor. iii. 1. 5 1 Tim. v. 9, 16. 6 1 Cor. v. 12, 13; 2 Cor. ii. 6–8.

which he says were uniform everywhere,—"as I teach everywhere, in every church."[1] After giving them particular directions in regard to a certain subject, he adds, "and so ordain I in all churches."[2] Opposing himself to some that were contentious, he cuts the matter short by saying, "we have no such custom, neither the churches of God."[3] And again he reminds them that "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."[4] All these indications seem to denote that the organization of the disciples into churches was early, definite, complete, and uniform.

STRICTNESS RATHER THAN LAXITY.

We find, moreover, evidences of *strictness*, rather than laxity, both in matters of belief and of practice. The apostle praises the Corinthians for keeping the ordinances as he delivered them unto them.[5] He joys to behold the *order* of the church at Colosse.[6] He bids the Thessalonians "stand fast, and hold the traditions which they have been taught by him, whether by word or

1 1 Cor. iv. 17. 2 vii. 17. 3 xi. 16. 4 xiv. 33. 5 1 Cor. xi. 2. 6 ii. 5.

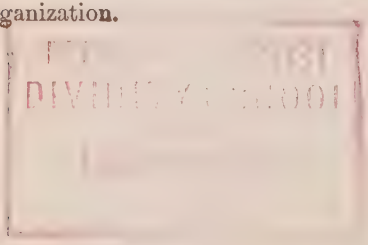
by letter."[1] And he solemnly commands them to withdraw themselves from every brother that does not walk according to the order which he had enjoined upon them.[2] John writes to the elect lady not to receive into her house, nor bid Godspeed to, any that bring any other doctrine than that which he taught.[3] And our Lord himself reproves the churches of Pergamos and Thyatira, not because they had as churches swerved from the faith, but because they had allowed erroneous doctrines to be promulgated among them by the Nicolaitanes and by Jezebel.[4]

In all these things we discern no marks of laxity. Latitudinarianism must find its justification, if it can, elsewhere than in the teachings of the New Testament. The Broad Church must bring the stones for its foundation from other quarries than those of primitive Christianity. From the review which we have taken, we gather that there is quite as much danger of our erring by transferring the lax views of our times to the times of apostolical strictness, as there is of our attributing our modern notions of strictness to

[1] 2 Thess. iii. 15. [2] Iii. 6. [3] 2 John 10, 11. [4] Rev. ii. 14-16, 20.

the more spontaneous and liberal proceedings of the apostles.

We think, then, to sum up the conclusion from the foregoing considerations, that the doctrine that the Lord's Supper is confided to the guardianship of the church, that it is to be observed *in* the church, and to be received only by the members of the church, and by such as, having all the qualifications of membership, may consistently be adopted as members, for the time; — we think that this view of the Lord's Supper is indispensable to the maintenance of a scriptural discipline, and a scriptural distinction between them that are within the church and them that are without; and that it is entirely in harmony with the letter and the spirit of that inspired word which gives such marked prominence to the associated relation of the disciples in church organization.



MEMBERSHIP IN ONE CHURCH NOT MEMBERSHIP IN ALL CHURCHES.

The position which we have just endeavored to establish is admitted in theory by all denominations of Christians. I do not know that there is, or has ever been, any sect in Christendom who have maintained that there is no connection between the Communion and church membership. — that it is just as proper for those who are without the visible church to come to the Lord's table as for those who are within. But some take the position, virtually, if not formally, that membership in any particular church entitles a person to the privilege of partaking of the Communion in *all* churches. This principle is in fact assumed by those members of Pedobaptist churches who complain that they are wronged in not being invited to partake of the Lord's Supper in Baptist churches. They are not members of our churches. The difference between their views and ours is such, that we could not consistently receive them as they are, if they wished to become members; nor could they consistently become members, if we were willing to receive

them. We regard them as being in an error which we are not at liberty to co-operate in upholding and extending; and they regard us in the same light. For them to claim the right to partake of the Lord's Supper in our churches, then, is certainly inconsistent with any established connection between church membership and the Communion, except in this form, that membership in any one church entitles a person to this privilege in *all* churches. Such a principle is in our judgment incompatible alike with the independence and the responsibility of churches; — with their independence, because it takes from them the right to judge of the qualifications of those whom they receive to their highest privileges; and with their responsibility, because it deprives them of the power to guard the table of the Lord against the approach of the unworthy

IV.

AN ORDERLY WALK.

The fourth and last prerequisite which we name as a condition of admission to the Lord's Supper is, *an orderly walk*, or a course of life regulated by the precepts of the gospel. The injunction of the apostle Paul, in his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, is very explicit and emphatic. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."[1] This withdrawal must be either total or partial. If total, it involves the dissolution of the tie of membership, and with this of course the cessation of the token of church fellowship in the joint participation of the sacred Supper. If partial and temporary, what other form can it take but the discontinuance for a season of that ritual token? The apostle himself admits, in another Epistle, the impracticability of withdrawing from all common social intercourse

[1] iii. 6.

with persons who are morally unfit to be associated in the relation of church membership. "I wrote unto you in an epistle," he says, "not to company with fornicators: yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a *brother* be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one, no, not to *eat*."[1] While it is impossible, then, without going out of the world, to avoid altogether the society of the immoral and the vicious, yet we are expressly forbidden to associate and eat with them *as brethren*. Our argument does not require us to interpret that expression, "to eat with such a one," as having specific reference to the Supper of the Lord. For if we may not eat a common meal with them, in our own houses, or in theirs, much less may we eat with them in the church, at the table of the Lord. The last would be a much more distinct recognition of them *as brethren* than the first. This passage

[1] 1 Cor. v. 9-11.

seems to furnish the key to the right interpretation of all those places of Scripture in which we are directed to withdraw ourselves from certain classes of persons, not to keep company with them, to have no fellowship with them.

The disorderly walking that disqualifies for admission to the Lord's Supper may be comprehended under these four divisions: IMMORAL CONDUCT; DISOBEDIENCE TO THE COMMANDS OF CHRIST; HERESY; and SCHISM, OR FACTIOUS BEHAVIOR.

I. IMMORAL CONDUCT.

By the rule given in the passage already quoted, we are required to withhold or withdraw this token of fellowship from those who are guilty of fornication, covetousness, idolatry, railing, drunkenness, or extortion. These specifications are certainly not intended to be *exhaustive*, but to serves as examples, on the basis of which we may generalize. They justify the rule, that all immoral conduct is a decisive disqualification for admission to the Lord's table. Nor is the above passage the only one which supports this position.

In the same chapter, mention is made of a member of the church in Corinth who was guilty of incest. The apostle censures the Corinthian church for not having previously removed this offender from their number,[1] and he gives them a solemn charge to deliver such a one to Satan,[2] and so to purge out from among them this leaven of wickedness.[3] The words of our Lord in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew's Gospel may also be appropriately cited here. A case is there supposed in which one brother has wronged another, and the course of proceeding for the aggrieved party is marked out with great particularity. As a final measure, after previous attempts to obtain redress have failed, the offender is to be reported to the church, and in case he refuses to hear them, he is to be to them as a heathen and a publican, he is to be separated from their fellowship, and from the privileges which it bestows.[4] It is true that this was spoken before the disciples fully comprehended the nature and the ordinances of a visible church of Christ; and the conception which it then suggested to their minds may have corresponded more to the pattern of the Jewish

1 1 Cor. v. 2. 2 vs. 4, 5. 3 v. 8. 4 vs. 15-18.

synagogue than to that which they afterwards understood to be the form of his church. And yet he had told them before this, that he was to establish a church on earth against which the gates of hell should never prevail.[1]

I need not say, that our unwillingness to commune with Pedobaptists has no connection with the disqualification above mentioned. We fully admit, and heartily admire, the pure lives and eminent piety of many of those whom we are not accustomed to invite to partake with us in this sacred rite. We rejoice with all our hearts in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ manifested in them, and in the work which he is doing in the world by their honored agency.

II. DISOBEDIENCE TO THE COMMANDS OF CHRIST.

Disobedience to the commands of Christ is a second form of disorderly walking which constitutes a disqualification for admission to the Lord's Supper. When the apostle gives that solemn charge to "the church of the Thessalonians,"[2] to withdraw themselves "from every brother that

[1] Matt. xvi. 18. [2] 2 Thess. i. 1.

walketh disorderly," he adds, in explanation of the last expression, "and not after the tradition which he received of us."[1] In the context, there is a particular reference to persons who are idle and meddlesome.[2] In the same chapter, he says, "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed."[3] In what sense they were to have no company with such, we have already seen explained by Paul himself in his letter to the Corinthians. The instructions of the apostle, to which he refers in these two passages, were clothed with Christ's own authority, as he himself explicitly declares, — "The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."[4] Not to walk after the tradition received from him, not to obey the word contained in his epistles, is the same, then, as disobedience to the commands of Christ, and as such involves the forfeiture of church fellowship and its privileged tokens.

Pedobaptists disobedient to one Command.— Here is one ground on which we justify our separation from Pedobaptists in the Communion of

1 2 Thess. iii. 6. 2 vs. 7-12. 3 v. 14. 4 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

the Lord's Supper. We are obliged to regard them as living in disobedience to one plain command of Christ,—the command to be baptized. I do not say in *wilful* disobedience; that would be inconsistent with the admissions already made: I do not say that the command is plain to them; that would be to judge their conscience: but we do believe and maintain that the duty which they have neglected to perform is made plain in the word of God. We know that they enjoy manifest and manifold tokens of being loved and accepted of Christ; but yet we do not think he is *indifferent*, or that he would have us indifferent, to their failure to obey him in this one particular. And while we see plain proof that this failure does not hinder many individuals among them from enjoying much larger measures of his Spirit than most of us enjoy, we think we see equally plain proof that their error in the matter of baptism is, in a general view, productive of very mischievous consequences to the cause of truth and holiness, and that it is owing in no inconsiderable degree to the persevering protest which we, as a denomination, have always made against it, that its mischievous consequences

are not much greater than they are. In this view we are very much confirmed, when we survey the moral and spiritual condition of those countries where the evils of involuntary membership in the church of Christ have not been counteracted or mitigated by the presence of any such antagonism as that which our protest exerts.

III. HERESY.

Heresy, or the holding and advocating of false doctrine, is a third form of disorderly walking, on account of which we are commanded to separate ourselves from those who are guilty of it. "I would," writes Paul to the Galatians, "they were even cut off which trouble you."[1] He does not give the same positive and solemn charge which he gave to the Corinthian church, perhaps because he had still more reason than in that case to doubt whether, if put to the proof, they would be obedient in all things;[2] but he plainly expresses his will in the matter. The persons to whom he alludes, and whose excision he desires, are described in the first chapter,[3] and elsewhere

1 Gal. v. 12. 2 2 Cor. ii. 9. 3 Gal. i. 7.

in the epistle, as perverters of the gospel of Christ. They were Judaizing teachers, who taught false doctrines, and caused divisions in the church. The same apostle also writes thus to Titus: "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject."[1] The word "heretic," which we now use to designate one who holds erroneous views on some of the more important doctrines of religion, probably denotes in this passsage rather one who causes dissension and division in the church, a schismatic, or factious person. Yet the former sense can hardly be altogether excluded; for these two things are usually conjoined. Those who hold fundamental errors, if they are at all sincere and earnest in their belief, will almost invariably endeavor to propagate their views, and make converts to them, thus causing dissension and division among brethren: and they, on the other hand, who, for whatsoever cause, wish to draw a party to themselves, very generally resort to the device of introducing or disseminating some new or unsound doctrine. Such are described by the

[1] Tit. iii. 10.

apostle as "speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."[1]

Pedobaptists chargeable with Grave Errors.— To apply this part of the subject to the questions at issue between us and our Pedobaptist brethren: Can the doctrine of infant baptism, or the belief that sprinkling is scriptural baptism, be regarded as a *heresy* of so serious a nature as to require us to decline to unite in church fellowship with those who hold it? Let us clear our minds from all odious associations connected with the word "heresy," and then look the matter fairly in the face, as it must appear from the stand-point of Baptist principles. The case may then be very plainly stated. There is either that in Scripture which requires them to practise only the immersion of professed believers for baptism, or there is not that in Scripture which requires us to practise this; which is the same as to say, there is that in Scripture which requires them to become Baptists, or there is not that in Scripture which justifies us in remaining Baptists. To accommodate Baxter's comprehensive expression to the subject before us, "They go in a way

[1] Acts xx. 30.

which hath neither precept nor example to warrant it, from a way which hath a full current of both;" or else we and our Baptist fathers have been altogether wrong from the beginning. And if the views of Baptists are in accordance with Scripture, the error of our Pedobaptist brethren is not a trivial one. Such results as these follow, *in our view*, from their principles and practice: That the baptized are not members of the church, or that membership in the church is not voluntary; that there are two sorts of baptism, one of which is a profession of the faith of the person baptized, and the other is a profession of the faith of another person; that regeneration is given in and by baptism, or that the church is, by the law of its constitution, necessarily composed in great part of persons who do not give, and were never supposed to give, any evidence of regeneration; that the church has a right to change essentially one of Christ's institutions, or that it is unessential whether it be observed as he ordained it or in some other manner; that baptism may rightfully be administered in a way which makes much of the language in which it is described in the Scriptures wholly unsuitable

and inapplicable, and which does not at all represent the facts and doctrines which baptism is declared in the Scriptures to represent; that the Scriptures are not, in all religious matters, the sufficient and only binding rule of faith and practice; — all these errors, which, according to our views as Baptists, result from their principles and practice, are in our judgment very serious. These consequences result, I repeat, according to our views as Baptists; for the question before us is, not how we ought to regard them individually as Christians, but what ought to be our rule of proceeding as a denomination towards them as Pedobaptists, chargeable, on our principles, and according to our settled conviction, with a twofold perversion of one of the most important institutions of Christianity. Baptists have from the beginning regarded it as a religious duty to bear testimony against these errors; the occasion for that testimony has neither ceased nor changed; so long as that occasion continues, there will be good reason why the Baptist denomination should exist; and so long as there is good reason why we should exist as a distinct denomination, there will be good reason why our church fellowship

should be limited to those who agree with us in protesting against these errors. Our protest, in order to be consistent, must be both verbal and practical.

Mixed Communion neutralizes our Protest against these Errors.— But mixed communion not only nullifies entirely the most important part of our protest, the practical; not only makes us say one thing in word, and the contrary in practice; but it also powerfully tends to suppress even the verbal part of our protest. Mixed communion tends directly and logically to mixed membership; and mixed membership tends directly and logically to the extinction of Baptist churches, and the suppression of Baptist principles. This is all very well, if we are wrong, and our fathers before us were wrong; but it is very ill if they were right, and we are right, in our views and practice on the subject of baptism. That the tendency of mixed communion is such as I have represented it, is admitted by Mr. Hall. The result which he foresaw as likely to follow from the adoption of his principles of communion, and which he did not deprecate, was, as expressed in his own words, that the term Baptist would

come to be applicable, not to *churches*, but only to *individuals*. But we have more conclusive evidence on this subject than the admission of Mr. Hall. Facts that have taken place in England since his day, and as the direct practical result of his principles, are the plainest proof of the tendency of those principles. The administration of believers' baptism on a week-day evening, to avoid giving offence to the Pedobaptist members of the church; the reception, without baptism, of persons who have renounced their belief that the ceremony performed upon them in infancy was valid; a manifest disposition to give up the Lord's Supper, as non-essential, where the cause of peace and union is supposed to demand this sacrifice; the banishment of scriptural teaching on the subject of baptism from the pulpit, and even from the private conversation of the minister with his people, as a stipulated condition of the continuance of the pastoral relation; the discipline and exclusion of members for the offence of propagating Baptist sentiments; the relaxation of all scriptural church discipline; and, after all, unpleasant collisions with Pedobaptist churches; — these legitimate logical

consequences, and certified actual results, of mixed communion, are more than enough to stamp it as a practice at war with truth, purity, liberty, and union.[1]

IV. SCHISM.

It has already been remarked that Schism, which was the fourth form of disorderly walking specified, is usually found connected with heresy in fact, as we have seen it connected in Scripture. As the passages quoted under the former head are pertinent to this division also, I will only add one from the Epistle to the Romans, which, like the others, couples these two offences together: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."[2]

We think we might easily sustain the charge of schism against Pedobaptists as a body; for if they are the party who have departed from the

1 See Curtis on Communion, Appendix H. pp. 296-8, and J. G. Fuller's Reply to Robert Hall, in Baptist Library, vol. i. pp. 223 and 276-8.

2 xvi. 17.

way of Scripture in regard to the mode and subjects of baptism, they are the party who are responsible for all the divisions and dissensions which have resulted from that departure.

Mixed Communion promotes Schism. — But, aside from this, the practice of intercommunion with them on our part is seen in fact, as intimated above, to gender strife. How "can two," much less two hundred, "walk together, except they be agreed?"[1] How can Baptists and Pedobaptists comply with the apostle's injunction to the members of the church in Corinth? How can they "all speak the same thing, and be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment?"[2] It is not difficult to see how they can live in peace together in the same community, and mutually esteem and love each other, and have much cordial and delightful communion and co-operation, while they abide in separate ecclesiastical organizations, and each understands the other's liberty, and respects the other's conscience, and expects the other to maintain and propagate his peculiar views by all honorable and Christian methods; though even then

1 Amos iii. 3. 2 1 Cor. i. 10.

the difference that requires their separation must seem to both parties a serious evil: but how they are to live and work harmoniously together in one church fellowship and under one church law, is in theory a mystery past finding out, and in practice certainly a problem yet unsolved. The things about which they differ are matters that particularly and vitally affect church relations. If they are peaceably united in those relations, it can only be on the condition that one of the parties shall consent to see, without protest, what they regard as a pernicious human invention constantly performed in the church as a divine rite; and that the other party shall consent to see, without protest, what they regard as a sacred parental duty systematically neglected. These are compromises which neither party have a right to demand, and to which neither party have a right to consent. And happily there is too much of conscience in both parties to permit a peaceable and lasting union on such unchristian terms. Yes, happily; for so long as our present difference of views continues, it would be a disgrace to us both if we could be cordially united in church relations. May Baptists never become so

degenerate as to consent to say, by their silent acquiescence, either that infant sprinkling is a divine rite or a matter of indifference. And may Pedobaptists never become so degenerate as to consent, by their silent acquiescence, to the neglect of parental and religious duty on the part of their brethren.

AN OBJECTION ANSWERED.

It may perhaps be objected that the passages cited under the four preceding sub-divisions refer to *church fellowship* in a *general* way, without any specific reference to the Lord's Supper. In reply to this objection, I would answer, in the first place, that having endeavored previously to establish the position that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance to be celebrated in the church, and expressive of church fellowship, I felt at liberty to use the passages that enjoin the withdrawal of that fellowship as constructively enjoining exclusion from the Communion, which is its chief token. I answer, secondly, that the principle here assumed seems to me to pervade the scriptural teachings so thoroughly, that it is next to

impossible to lay down *any* scriptural terms of communion at the Lord's table, except upon the admission that the ordinance is inseparably connected with church fellowship. To treat the subject otherwise, would be, as it appears to me, a violent putting asunder of what the Lord has joined together. The objection suggests an additional argument in favor of our position that the Lord's Supper is a *church* ordinance.

RECAPITULATION.

In the four above-named requisites, then, we find the scriptural terms of admission to the Lord's Supper. None should be admitted to a participation in this rite but those who avow themselves to be disciples of Christ, who have professed their faith in him by baptism, who are members of some visible church, and who walk in an orderly manner, according to the precepts of the gospel. The want of any one of these requisites is a disqualification for admission to the Lord's Supper.

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

In treating of the above scriptural prerequisites to the participation of the Lord's Supper, I have already forestalled some of the objections which are commonly urged against the practice of Baptists, in confining their church fellowship to those who, in their judgment, possess these scriptural qualifications. But as various other objections are brought against what is called our *Close Communion* (the term Close Baptism would be more pertinent; but it does not grieve us to be found adhering *closely* to the word of God and primitive practice in regard to either ordinance), I will notice in order the most common and the most important of these objections.

I. PRIMITIVE RULES NOT APPLICABLE NOW.

Some persons who admit that the prerequisites above named were indispensable in the times of apostolical purity and unity, deny that they ought to be held indispensable in the present altered condition of things. The churches of Christ, they say, have unhappily come into an

abnormal, distracted condition; truth and holiness are found in a measure in all, at least in all evangelical denominations; and they are not found in perfection in any, certainly not among Baptists. The same causes which were, or would have been, just bars to the Communion in the days of the apostles, are not necessarily so now. We have to do with classes of persons which had no representatives in apostolical times; — with persons unquestionably regenerate, who delay baptism, not from an unwillingness to obey Christ's command, but from doubts or ignorance as to their duty; and with persons unquestionably regenerate, and just as unquestionably unbaptized, who remain unbaptized for no other reason but that they misunderstand the Lord's command, and sincerely think they have received baptism. Rigid rules, derived from times of primitive purity and unity, require to be modified, it is said, when transferred to a time and a condition of things so greatly altered. So far as the judgment of individual character is concerned, we fully admit that the altered condition of things demands a very important modification of our conclusions. We do judge of our Pedobaptist

brethren very differently from what the Scriptures would have required us to judge, in primitive times, of any who should then have refused to be baptized.

The Laws of Christ unchangeable.—But though the times have changed, we suppose that the will of the Lord, in regard to the constitution of his church, and the nature and mode of his ordinances, has not changed at all. We suppose that, through all changes of time and circumstance, he requires us to keep the ordinances as he delivered them to us; that they remain essentially unchangeable, until *he* sees fit to change them. We know that the times change; that men change; that "all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth forever."[1] No man must add anything to that, or take anything from it.

The Primitive Order ought to be restored.—And in regard to this matter, we suppose that such questions as these are pertinent: *how has it come to pass* that there is so great a difference between

[1] 1 Pet. i. 24, 25.

primitive times and ours? Is it an evil to be deplored, and, if possible, remedied? If it is, have *we* any responsibility in the matter? Are we bound to consider whether the influence of our principles and practice tends to perpetuate, or to correct, the evil? In the answers to such questions as these, we find our duty plainly pointed out. Our principles and practice must not be *so* conformed to the existing state of things as to imply that we are *reconciled* to it, or that we despair of seeing the primitive order *restored:* they must not be so modified as to part with their *tendency* to restore the primitive order. On any other principle, error becomes its own justification; the more some men disobey the commands of Christ, the less other men are bound to obey them; and every perversion of his truth and every corruption of his ordinances propagates and perpetuates itself without remedy, unless he miraculously interpose to prevent. On any other principle, his kingship in Zion is an empty title, and fallible and changeable men become practically the supreme lawgivers in his church. We have not so learned Christ. We believe that we are bound to observe, and to

teach others, as far as our precept and example can influence them, to observe all things whatsoever he has commanded, even unto the end of the world.[1] We know that there are sundry editions of his "*Revised* Statutes" abroad in the world; but we do not regard them as genuine; they are not published "by authority;" they do not bear the royal signature and seal. We believe that we are bound to withdraw ourselves from every *brother* that walketh disorderly, yet not to count him as an enemy, but to *admonish him* AS A BROTHER.[2] And we believe that these plain principles of reason and precepts of Scripture require us to persevere in that course which we have hitherto pursued in regard to the terms of admission to the Lord's Supper, and which has resulted, with the blessing of God, in wholly reclaiming so many from their error, and in partially reclaiming multitudes more.

Some objectors to our strict communion, while they admit that the terms above mentioned are ordinarily prerequisite, urge that these terms may lawfully and properly be sometimes dispensed with, out of regard to principles that are

1 Matt. xxviii. 20. 2 2 Thess. iii. 14, 15.

higher, and considerations that are more important. There are several forms of objection, which may be included under this general description.

II. BAPTISM ONLY AN EXTERNAL RITE.

It is said by some that Baptism is, after all, but an *external* rite; and that we ought not to be so punctilious about it as to let it interfere with that law of Christian love which is so much higher and more fundamental. We answer, that we do not by any means put baptism on an equality with that love which is the fulfilling of the law. We do not let our views in regard to this ordinance interfere with the exercise of our Christian affection towards all who love our Lord in sincerity. But communing with them in the Lord's Supper is a form of fellowship which we think he intended to be expressive of something more than the love which every disciple owes to his fellow-disciple, and to be limited to those who possess certain other qualifications besides love to him, — qualifications which, in our judgment, are not possessed by our Pedobaptist brethren.

Those who find fault with our practice on this ground seem to me to fall themselves into the very error in regard to the Communion with which they charge us in regard to Baptism. They magnify it unduly, as if there were no other expression of Christian love but that; as if there could be no Christian love or fellowship between those who do not commune together at the Lord's table. While they remind us that Baptism is but an external rite, they seem to forget that the Lord's Supper is an external rite too.

Our Lord saw fit to appoint both these external rites; and therefore it is fit that we should observe them both, and observe them in the way and the order of his appointment. If there had been any incompatibility between the strict observance of them and the fulfilment of the great law of love, he would either not have appointed them, or else he would have given us an express license to dispense with them whenever in our judgment obedience to that higher law should require. But his voice says to us, "If ye *love* me, *keep* my commandments."[1] And we do not find that those who are most careless about exter

[1] Jno. xiv. 15.

nal duties are most careful to comply with more spiritual requirements. These ought we to do, and not to leave the other undone.[1]

We add, also, in answer to this objection, that the great law of love does not allow us to be silent when we see our brother in error. It requires us to rebuke his error, in word and deed. We must do this with love and tenderness indeed; but we must not refrain from doing it.

III. PEDOBAPTISTS THINK THEMSELVES BAPTIZED.

Another form of objection to our practice is this. Our Pedobaptist brethren sincerely think they have been baptized: why should we not show respect to their conscientious convictions by receiving them to that privilege for which they are fully persuaded in their own minds that they are qualified? I answer, If they conscientiously believe they have been baptized, that is a good reason why *they* should act as though they believed it; and if we conscientiously believe the contrary, that is just as good a reason why *we* should act as though we believed the con-

[1] Matt. xxiii. 23.

trary. *They* see no reason why they should not commune at the Lord's table. Let them do so. We put no hindrance in their way. Is not that enough? Are we required to show our respect for their consciences by *uniting with them* in doing a thing which they think to be proper, but which we do not? Do we not owe some respect to our own consciences? Do they not owe some respect to ours, as well as we to theirs? Is *their* conscience to be the rule of *our* action, as well as of theirs? Especially, is the conscience of *individuals* among them to give law to our *churches?* Before we can consistently *co-operate* in any religious service, we must be agreed as to what the Lord requires of us severally in relation to the matter in hand.

IV. STRICT COMMUNION A HINDRANCE TO UNION.

But one of the most common grounds on which it is urged that we ought to invite Pedobaptists to our communion is, that by doing so we should promote Christian *union*, and so remove one of the greatest reproaches from the Christian cause. Our Lord's prayer for the union

of his people is appealed to; and our practice in regard to the Communion is often spoken of as if it were one of the chief obstacles to the realization of what our Saviour prayed for so earnestly. This, probably, is with many the most effective argument in favor of relaxing our rule in respect to the Lord's Supper. Strange things are done and demanded now-a-days in the abused name of Christian Union. Let us look a little more closely at this demand.

Truth before Union. — In the first place, the only union which our Lord desires for his people is, union in the truth. He does not command nor permit us to sacrifice truth for the sake of union. Both are good; but if we must choose between them, let us prefer truth. And let us never forget, that however noble and Christian enthusiasm for union may be, enthusiasm for truth is nobler and more Christian still. "Buy the truth, and sell it not."[1] Sell it not, even for union; no, not even a single grain of truth for a solid globe of union. If the two-edged sword of truth, which proceedeth out of the mouth of Christ, severs us, let it cut, "even to the dividing

[1] Prov. xxiii. 23.

asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow,"[1] — even to the setting "a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."[2] I am afraid this last passage is overlooked or forgotten by those who try to hinder persons who are convinced of the truth of Baptist views from joining Baptist churches, by appealing to their love of parents and other relatives, from whom they must separate at the Communion table. Surely they do not consider what master they are serving, nor what a perilous snare they are setting for souls, when they thus tempt others to follow the dictates of natural affection in preference to what they believe to be the will of Christ. Neither church union nor family union is to be purchased at that fatal price.

A Good Conscience before Union. — Again, our Lord does not wish his people to sacrifice a good conscience for the sake of union. If any form or expression of union is proposed to us in which we cannot participate without grave doubts whether we are doing right in his sight, then he

1 Heb. v. 12. 2 Matt. x. 35.

certainly will not be pleased with us if we participate in it in spite of our doubts. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."[1]

Allegiance to Christ before Union.— Neither will the Lord be pleased with us if in our anxiety for union we let our complaisance to his people overrule our allegiance to him. We must not sacrifice any portion of that allegiance on the altar of union. If we believe that he has committed to us a special trust, and laid upon us a special responsibility, in regard to the maintenance of one or both the two expressive symbolical rites of his religion, he certainly will not look upon us with favor if we betray this trust, if we shake off this responsibility, under the pretence or the plea of promoting union.

Baptists called unto Strictness.—And this is just what we do believe: and it is precisely on this ground that we meet the charge of undue strictness and punctiliousness in regard to external ordinances. We do believe that we are *bound*, by fidelity to Christ, to be strict, to be punctilious, if any choose to call it so, in upholding our views in regard to these two ordinances of Christ's

[1] Rom. xiv. 23.

house. We do believe, though these may seem to some but vain words, that he has called us to just this service; that he has given us our existence, our permanence, our enlargement, for this specific purpose,—that we might maintain Baptism in its scriptural form and place, and in its appointed relation to the Lord's Supper; and that we might keep up a consistent and perpetual protest, in word and deed, against the perversion of both these ordinances. And even though it be true that this mission of ours, to use a common and convenient term, is attended with the danger of unduly magnifying these ordinances, or of thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, on account of our adherence to the primitive pattern in respect to them, yet we do not feel at liberty to decline to fulfil the assigned duty on account of the attendant danger.

Baptists not responsible for the Separation. — But if it were certain that the joint participation of the Lord's Supper by Baptists and other denominations was the particular manifestation of Christian union just now imperatively demanded, we should still feel at liberty to ask, On whose part is the change of practice called for? With

whom rests the *responsibility* of perpetuating this lamentable separation? With those who have kept the ordinances as the Lord delivered them, or with those who have perverted them? Nay, more, the position of many of our Pedobaptist brethren justifies us in asking, Which ought to make the sacrifice for the sake of union, — we, of our convictions of duty, or they, of their convenience and preference? For while we cannot conscientiously admit the validity of their baptism, they almost universally admit the validity of ours; and while we cannot conscientiously regard infant baptism as anything more than a human ceremony, a large and growing proportion of them declare plainly, by their practical neglect of it, that they can with a good conscience give it up. To all this numerous class of Pedobaptists we say, that if our separation from them at the communion table is any obstacle to the progress of Christian union, or any grief to them, it belongs to them to remove it, and not to us. If they are enough in love with Christian union to be willing to forego their preferences, instead of asking us to violate our consciences, there is no reason why this stumbling-block should not be wholly

taken out of the way, so far as we and they are concerned, in the course of a few years. If they will henceforth *practise* only believers' baptism by immersion, which they certainly can do without any scruple of conscience, even if they cannot go to the extent of admitting that infant sprinkling is unlawful, the separating wall between us will soon be broken down.

Baptism a Symbol of Ecclesiastical Union.— But this matter of baptism has a more direct and important connection with Christian union than through its relation to the Lord's Supper. There is quite as much reason for regarding the former rite as symbolical of the union with one another of all who are united to Christ, as there is for so regarding the latter. It is true that the Apostle says to the Corinthians, "We, being many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf;"[1] but it is equally true that the same apostle says to the same Corinthians, "By one Spirit we are all *baptized* into one body."[2] And still more pertinent to our purpose are his words to the Ephesians, "Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body,

[1] 1 Cor. x. 17. [2] xii. 13.

and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, *one baptism*, one God and Father of all."[1] Pedobaptists and we have not now *one* baptism. Theirs and ours, though called by the same name, are two distinct things. They are administered on different grounds, to different sorts of persons, and in different modes; the *acts* are different, the *subjects* are different, the *reasons* are different: they cannot with any propriety be spoken of as *one* baptism. This passage then is our warrant for charging upon *them* the rupture of the bond of peace, the severance of the unity of the Spirit; and for calling upon *them* to re-knit that bond, to repair that unity, by returning to that *one baptism*, the scriptural character of which is admitted by themselves, and attested by the unprejudiced scholarship of the whole Christian world.

Mixed Communion not a Cure, but a Cause, of Disunion.—But supposing we were at liberty to change our practice in regard to the communion, we are not by any means convinced that Christian union would be promoted by the change. What light does the past history of the church

[1] Iv. 3-6.

shed upon this subject? The desire for Christian union has grown up to its present dimensions, in spite, shall I say? of our alleged exclusiveness. The spirit of union has, undeniably I think, been constantly increasing, while we have been bearing our uncompromising testimony on the subject of baptism. Zeal for Christian union has manifested itself most in those parts of Christendom where Baptists are most numerous. One of the greatest obstacles in the world to that union has been, and is, the civil inequality of different denominations, resulting from the unhallowed alliance between the church and the state; and that hindrance to Christian union has been opposed more constantly, at greater sacrifices, and with greater success, by Baptists, than by any other denomination of Christians. If Christian liberty — freedom to worship God without interference from the civil power — is an important means and an indispensable precursor of Christian union, the verdict of history will show that Baptists have been foremost in promoting union in this respect. They have been standard bearers in many a hard-fought battle for freedom of conscience; and they are doing and suffering in

the same cause in more than one kingdom of Europe even now.

It does not appear, then, that Baptists are *especially* responsible for the divisions that prevail among Christians. It does not appear that there is any *special* reason why *we* should be called on to deny our conscientious convictions and forego our denominational existence for the sake of uniting the divided body of Christ. Since the cause of union has prospered so well and advanced so wonderfully, while we have adhered to our present principles and practice, there does not seem to be any reasonable prospect of promoting that cause by changing either. Nay, we think the prospect is just the reverse. Instead of healing the divisions of Zion by changing our rule of communion, we should be far more likely to increase them. The results which might reasonably be expected to ensue are such as these:

1. In the first place, extensive alienations of feeling, discord and division in Baptist churches. For the number of our churches must be very small indeed in which such a change could be introduced with anything like unanimity, or even

without energetic remonstrance and decided opposition.

2. In the next place, it would result at once in adding one to the present number of Christian sects, at least in this country, by dividing the Baptist denomination into two. No one, I am persuaded, can soberly entertain the belief that our churches as a whole could be induced to acquiesce in such a departure from the principles which we have always held to be scriptural, and the usages which we have always held to be binding. And although there are those who bear with us the common name of Baptists, who have always practised mixed communion, yet inasmuch as there are other doctrinal and ecclesiastical differences which would prevent us from coalescing with them, the result would be, as before stated, the formation of one more sect.

3. And in the third place, such a change on our part as the adoption, by any considerable number of our churches, of the practice of mixed communion, would introduce a new element of discord into other denominations. For our new practice could have no other justification than the principle that baptism is not a prerequisite to the par-

ticipation of the Lord's Supper. This principle is admitted by the ablest advocates of mixed communion; and mixed communion has tended to give currency to this principle. There is no reason to suppose it would be otherwise in the case contemplated. But the principle which we thus call in question is one in which we and our Pedobaptist brethren have hitherto been happily agreed. We can unite with them in the communion of the Lord's Supper only on a principle which neither we nor they nor any denomination of Christians admit. Thus at the outset we inaugurate a new controversy, which we and they alike deprecate, and take the most effectual method to introduce a new cause of division among all denominations.

Those who would have our churches adopt a less strict rule of communion, for the sake of promoting union among the disciples of Christ, may well be asked to look at these probable consequences of the measure which they countenance. They would be sadly disappointed if their remedy should be found to aggravate the disease. There is no hope of advancing Christian union by a measure which threatens to rend asunder thou-

sands of Baptist churches, to split one of the largest and most united denominations in our country into two contending factions, and to cast a new apple of discord into the enclosure of every other religious sect.

Mixed Communion a Fictitious Token of Union.—But the gravest objection to the proposed measure as an expression of union remains to be stated. It wears to my mind an aspect of duplicity and irreverence,—I might say of sacrilege. Consider how the matter stands. We desire to unite with Pedobaptists at the Lord's table; but we profess ourselves to be Baptists still. We cannot receive them as baptized; they do not wish to be received—they would not even dare to come—as unbaptized. We repudiate them on the ground on which they come, and receive them on the ground which they repudiate. We know that they come as baptized persons; they know that we receive them as unbaptized persons. Looking towards Pedobaptists, we desire inter-communion on one ground; looking towards Baptists, we defend it on another. Such a union as this reminds us very forcibly of some compromises of which we read in the earlier

history of the church, to say nothing of more modern and secular platforms, where a form of words is devised in which the two differing parties can easily unite, by the simple contrivance of understanding the same words in two opposite senses. So is it whenever we unite with Pedobaptists in the Communion. We and they are known to put different and contradictory constructions upon our act of union. Is this the measure that is to heal our divisions? Is not this new Henoticon, this ambiguous reconciler, who comes into the church with a lie in his right hand, and sits down to play a game of dissimulation at the table of the Lord, worthy to be rejected, with equal abhorrence, by both Baptists and Pedobaptists?

V. WHY NOT INVITE BAPTIZED MEMBERS OF PEDOBAPTIST CHURCHES?

Some persons who admit the legitimacy of the terms of Communion already laid down, and assent to the propriety of our rule in ordinary cases, find fault with our strictness in not making an exception in favor of that numerous and con-

stantly increasing class, the baptized members of Pedobaptist churches. They, it is urged, possess the qualifications which we deem indispensable, and may therefore properly and consistently be received; or, as some would prefer to say, cannot properly and consistently be rejected. Besides, by receiving such, we should, it is thought, conciliate the favor of our Pedobaptist brethren, at least of those among them who are already favorably disposed towards our principles, and thus prepare the way for a more rapid diffusion of our views of baptism.

But the practice of inviting such to partake with us of the Lord's Supper seems to me liable to these three weighty objections:—

1. It is a very invidious proceeding. It wears the aspect of an attempt to sow the seeds of discord in our neighbor's ground. Why should we invade their borders, and attempt to apply such personal discriminations within the circle of their church enclosure? It is certainly far more dignified, fraternal, and Christian, to deal with them collectively as churches and as denominations.

2. Secondly, this proceeding seems to me objectionable on a more specific and personal

ground. These members of Pedobaptist churches, though themselves baptized, are actively promoting, by the influence of their example, those errors against which our duty to protest is the only charter of our right to exist as a denomination.

3. But, thirdly and chiefly, this practice seems to me to be deprecated on the ground that the communion of the Lord's Supper properly symbolizes *church* fellowship, and is committed to the guardianship of churches as such. It was not designed, and cannot properly be used, as a token of our fellowship for individuals, irrespective of their church relations. The rule which applies to the whole, applies to all its parts. Separation into different denominations implies church disfellowship; union at the communion table implies church fellowship. If our separation is justifiable, there is no consistent basis for inter-communion; if inter-communion is proper, there is no justifiable ground of denominational separation. Baptist and Pedobaptist churches, immersing and sprinkling churches, cannot hold fellowship with each other without holding fellowship with what they believe to be contrary to Christ's command.

We believe that only immersion on a profession of faith is valid baptism; they believe that baptism may be valid without either of these conditions. We believe that infant baptism is contrary to the Lord's will and appointment; they believe, some of them still, — and this is what their creeds and confessions still declare, — that infant baptism is of divine appointment and obligation. Neither party can consistently countenance what they regard as the errors of the other. And this is a sufficient bar to their intercommunion.

VI. PLEA FOR DISPENSING WITH THE RULE IN EXTREME CASES.

Another special exception to our ordinary rule and practice may be pleaded for by some, in favor of particular individuals who happen to be so situated that if they do not partake of the communion in *our* churches, they will be deprived of the privilege altogether. These are extreme cases, and comparatively few in number. Such persons, if they desire to partake of the communion in our churches, are entitled to be treated respectfully and tenderly. But we do

not think we have any liberty to depart from what we regard as a Scripture rule, in order to gratify their desire. And even if we did not regard such a departure as unlawful, we should still think it inexpedient; for a wholesome general rule must not bend to accommodate individual feelings, except in very extraordinary cases. And it would be very difficult to fix any precise and permanent limits to exceptions of this sort. They would be likely to encroach more and more, until the rule became merely nominal.

The same principle applies to members of Baptist churches who are so situated that they cannot receive the Communion unless they receive it in Pedobaptist churches. If they are fully and intelligently convinced in their consciences that their Baptist principles are right, they will be likely to think it a greater privilege, and a more important means of grace, to act according to those principles, than to partake of the Communion contrary to them.

I know that some Baptists take the position, that as baptized persons *they* have a perfect right to partake of the Lord's Supper whenever and wherever they have opportunity. I think that

such persons have not duly considered the matter, either as a question of propriety and courtesy, or of principle and responsibility. In the former view, I do not see how we can decently claim a privilege which we refuse to reciprocate. And in the latter view, I do not see how we can regard our act otherwise than as an indorsement of their views of the proper qualifications for receiving the Lord's Supper. When we voluntarily unite with others in any act, it seems to me to be a very expressive acknowledgment, on our part, of the fitness of the act on theirs.

VII. ALLEGED INCONSISTENCY OF OUR PRACTICE.

Another objection which some bring against our practice of strict communion is, that we are not consistent with ourselves. This objection takes several forms.

1. *We expect to commune with Pedobaptists in Heaven.*—It is very common for objectors to say to us, "You admit that your Pedobaptist brethren are Christians, and therefore you expect to have communion with them in heaven; how inconsistent then to refuse to commune with them

on earth." This seems to some a very conclusive way of settling the question. But if they will only consider that they are but playing at fast and loose with a word, they will see at once how little reason we have to be embarrassed by their objection. They confound two very distinct kinds of fellowship, the personal and the ecclesiastical, two very distinct senses of the word communion, the spiritual and the ritual. In the former sense of the word, we *do* have communion on earth with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ, whether Baptists or Pedobaptists; we have spiritual fellowship with them all. In the latter sense of the word, we do *not* expect to commune in heaven with any, whether Baptists or Pedobaptists; we do not expect to partake of the Lord's Supper in heaven. Whichever sense of the word they choose, it equally neutralizes the dilemma in which they would involve us, and relieves us of the charge of inconsistency. They have no right to employ one of these senses in their premises and the other in their conclusion.

2. *We reject the Better and receive the Worse.* — Another form in which this charge is preferred

against us is this: "You acknowledge the Christian character and eminent piety of many of your Pedobaptist brethren; you know that they are far superior, in these respects, to many members of Baptist churches; and yet you give the Communion to the latter and refuse it to the former; you reject the better and receive the worse." While we freely admit the facts on which this objection is founded, the superior worthiness of many whom we reject in comparison with many whom we receive, we yet find no difficulty in meeting this charge of inconsistency. We believe that the Lord requires, as qualifications for coming to his table, certain conditions, partly moral and spiritual, and partly external and ceremonial. The former are certainly much the more important, in a general estimate of character; but both are equally required in the case in question, and we have no more authority to dispense with the latter than we have to dispense with the former: we have no authority to dispense with either. The former are, from the nature of the case, susceptible of being more readily ascertained, and more perfectly applied, than the latter. But because we are inevitably liable to err, in endeav-

oring to apply one part of our Lord's rule, it does not follow that we are at liberty to be negligent in applying another part of it, where there is no such difficulty. The objection here urged does not lie against us more than others. How is it with Pedobaptists? Do they not withhold the Communion from all whom they regard as unbaptized, however much some of these may excel in piety many of their communicants? Yet this does not argue that they think baptism more important than piety. The truth is, that the principle on which this objection is founded, however specious it may seem, is entirely fallacious. Our rules of ecclesiastical proceeding, of according or withholding church privileges, cannot be based on the comparative piety of different individuals or denominations. "We have a more sure word, unto which we do well to take heed." The argument which rests on this principle refutes itself by proving a great deal too much. "The Lord loves and honors our Pedobaptist brethren; therefore, we ought to give up our strict communion, that we may be one with those whom the Lord owns." That is one application of the principle. "The Lord

loves and honors us Baptists, too; therefore, our Pedobaptist brethren ought to give up their sprinkling and infant-baptism, that they may be one with those whom the Lord owns." That is another application of precisely the same principle. Perhaps our Pedobaptist brethren would think us assuming if we went farther, and intimated, that, in regard to the chief matters in dispute between us, the Lord is showing which he loves and honors most, by the growing favor with which our views are received among them. Nay, let us rather regard it as a proof of his love to *them*, that he is revealing his truth to them more and more clearly. In this we have a right to rejoice.

3. *We recognize Pedobaptists as Brethren.* — There is one more form in which we have to meet the charge of inconsistency. "You co-operate with your brethren of other denominations in enterprises of Christian benevolence, — in Bible Societies, Tract Societies, Sunday-School Unions, and various other evangelical and missionary works; you do not scruple to unite with them in Union prayer meetings, and in devotional exercises generally; you do not even

hesitate to acknowledge their ministers as faithful ministers of the gospel, by inviting them into your pulpits; and yet you will not admit them to the Lord's table." We do indeed co-operate with them, and recognize them, in these various ways, as brethren in the Lord, honored and beloved. We do so cheerfully, heartily, and, as we think, consistently, although we cannot invite them to unite with us in celebrating the Lord's Supper. Our justification is, that none of the forms of fraternal fellowship in which we so freely and gladly associate with them, imply what our inter-communion with them in that rite would imply. None of these acts of ours imply that they are members of our churches, or qualified to become such. None of these acts imply that we are in church fellowship with them. None of these acts imply that we regard them as baptized persons. Our view of the instituted relation between the two ordinances of the Lord's house is such, that we dare not invite to a participation of the Lord's Supper many with whom we rejoice to mingle in various interchanges of Christian fellowship. The fact that they are in our view unbaptized is a specific and

absolute bar to that particular form of fellowship which union at the Lord's table symbolizes and expresses.

VIII. ALLEGED IMPOLICY OF OUR PRACTICE.

This consideration is pertinent only on the supposition that we are at *liberty* to change our practice if we judged it expedient. Conceding this, for the sake of argument, I maintain that we should gain nothing by the change. Mr. Hall presents the opposite view in the following words: after laying down the principle, "that no set of men are entitled to prescribe, as an indispensable condition of communion, what the New Testament has not enjoined as a condition of salvation," he says, "the writer is persuaded that a departure from this principle in the denomination to which he belongs has been extremely injurious, not only to the credit and prosperity of that particular body (which is a very subordinate consideration), but to the general interests of truth; and that but for the obstruction arising from that quarter, the views they entertain of one of the sacraments would

have obtained a more extensive prevalence. By keeping themselves in a state of separation and seclusion from other Christians, they have not only evinced an inattention to some of the most important injunctions of Scripture, but have raised up an invincible barrier to the propagation of their sentiments beyond the precincts of their own party."[1]

Reasoning from general principles, the opposite conclusion seems to me altogether more just. Any particular truth or principle will be likely to attract attention, respect, and examination, just in proportion to the openness, firmness, and consistency with which those who receive it manifest in practice their sense of its importance. But it is unnecessary to discuss the question on abstract grounds. The evidence of facts is decisive. Those which I have already cited under a former head show that, in England, the practice of mixed communion has operated to suppress discussion, — not only to prevent the extension of Baptist principles, but even to deprive Baptists themselves of the liberty of avowing and advocating them. When Robert Hall died, thirty

[1] Vol. i. p. 285.

years ago (1831), there were more than 100,000 Baptists in England, and less than 400,000 in the United States. The population of England has increased since then from 13,000,000 to 20,000,000; but the number of Baptists remains about the same. The population of the United States, which was then about the same as that of England, has fully doubled; but the number of Baptists has much more than kept pace with this rapid increase, having risen from less than 400,000 to more than 1,000,000. Thus it appears that in England, where mixed communion has generally prevailed, our numbers have diminished, compared with the population, in the ratio of thirty-three per cent.; while in this country, where strict communion has been the rule, our numbers have increased, relatively to the population, in the ratio of about fifty per cent. And it ought to be taken into account, moreover, that this increase has taken place in our country under the signal disadvantage, that our growth has been derived in great part from immigration and the accession of new territory; and that, of the population thus added, a large proportion has been composed of Romanists, and a very small per cent. of Baptists;

while in England the increase of population has been mainly natural. Add to this, that in our country the influence of Baptist principles has greatly modified the views and usages of other denominations, so that immersion is quite extensively practised, and infant baptism quite extensively neglected, by those who are not called Baptists; whereas no such approximation to our views and practice has taken place in England. It is plain that Mr. Hall was mistaken, in supposing that the best way for Baptists to obtain credit and currency for their principles would be to practise inter-communion at the Lord's table with other denominations. Where the obstruction which he deplored has been removed, we have lost ground; where it has been retained, we have rapidly advanced: his invincible barrier has proved a mighty lever of progress. As a question of policy merely, there can be no dispute about the expediency of adhering to our strictness.

CONCLUSION.

Thus, from every view which we take of the question, we come back to the conclusion, that

our restricted communion rests on good grounds of reason and Scripture. It is right; it is consistent; it is expedient. Let us very briefly sum up, in conclusion, the grounds on which we object to mixed communion. If we are to practise inter-communion with Pedobaptists, we must seek our justification for it in one of these four principles; either,

1. That baptism is not prerequisite to the participation of the Lord's Supper; or,

2. That immersion on profession of faith is not essential to baptism; or,

3. That the individual, and not the church, is to be judge of his qualification for admission to the Communion; or,

4. That the church has no responsibility in regard to the qualifications of those who come to her communion.

If we say that baptism is not prerequisite to the Communion, we place ourselves in opposition to the belief and practice of all times and churches.

If we say that immersion or profession of faith is not essential to baptism, we renounce *Baptist* principles altogether.

If we say that the individual, not the church, is to be the judge of his qualification for the communion, we adopt a principle which is contrary to sound reason, and fatal to the very ends for which the church of Christ was constituted. For if the conscience of the individual is to be the rule of the action of the church in regard to his admission to the Lord's Supper, why not also in regard to his regeneration, and his doctrinal belief, and his obedience to Christ's commands generally?

If we say that the church has no responsibility in regard to admitting persons to the table of the Lord, we abandon the cherished principle of the independence of the churches, and their accountableness to Christ, and we overthrow the foundations of all church discipline.

Finally, brethren, I am persuaded that we do well in this matter to continue in the path of strictness in the application of scriptural principles to both the ordinances of Christ's house. God has greatly honored and blessed us in the course which we have hitherto pursued, and I hear no voice of his providence or his Spirit bidding us to reverse our practice. I think we have

abundant reason to be satisfied with the position which we occupy as a denomination in reference to the two symbolical rites of our religion. Nay, more, I think our position in reference to the Christian ordinances is eminently adapted to give exercise and discipline to the noblest qualities of Christian manhood. It allows us to indulge our fraternal regards, and extend our fraternal courtesies, towards all who love our Lord Jesus Christ, up to the point where we must choose whether complaisance to them, or loyalty to him, shall be our guiding principle; and there it bids us stop. It allows us to show that we love Christ's people much, but compels us to show that we love Christ himself more. It gives large liberty for the exercise of Christian charity, but insists imperatively on the exercise of Christian conscientiousness. "*Christo et Ecclesiæ*" is its motto. not the Church and Christ; not union with our brethren first, and then, as far as may be, with him; but union with him, fidelity to him, first, by all means, and at all hazards; and then union with our brethren, as far as may be, as far as he has already made plain to us and to them a common rule to walk by. We shall never find, and need

never covet, a position more honorable and more Christian than this. And as it must be by acting on just these principles, if at all, that all Christians will come at last to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, so it is by a steadfast adherence to these principles that we shall best perform our part, as a denomination, towards insuring and hastening that much-desired and long-sought consummation.

CLOSE COMMUNION.

BY

REV. ALVAH HOVEY, D.D.

PHILADELPHIA:
AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,
1420 CHESTNUT STREET.

CLOSE COMMUNION.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST PRINCIPLES.

It is our purpose in the present work, to state the chief reasons which have led the Baptists of America, with few exceptions,* to invite only Christians of their own faith and order to the Lord's table; believing that such a statement will tend to promote Christian fellowship between them and others. Should this discussion seem to be tinged in any degree with a partisan or uncharitable spirit, we beg leave to disclaim such a spirit,

* It is proper to say that we refer to regular, or Calvinistic Baptists only. In this country the Free-will Baptists practise open communion, while those of England practise what is called close communion.

and to refer the evil to its proper source, inaccuracy of language. Without expecting that the following argument will be deemed conclusive throughout by all our readers, we certainly anticipate their assent to a large part of it, and we bespeak for the whole a candid perusal. It will be necessary for us to mention, at the outset, a few doctrinal principles which underlie the argument for "close communion." These principles are held to be true and fundamental by nearly all the members of Baptist churches in our land. We shall state them as briefly as comports with the design of this work, not attempting an extended vindication of their truth.

One of these principles is, that the New Testament is our ultimate authority in respect to church order and action. Accepting without reserve the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Old Testament scriptures, and believing that to the end of time they will be exceedingly precious and useful to the Christian, we are nevertheless unable to discover in them any proper model or account of a Christian church. Their laws, and

histories, and songs of praise, bear the impress of Judaism. Even their predictions of the Messiah and his reign are expressed in language determined by the peculiarities of that dispensation. And surely it will be admitted that the Mosaic economy differed greatly from the Christian. The former had a national organization, a national temple, a national atonement; the latter has none of these. The former had an extensive and burdensome ritual—sacrifices, oblations, purifications, to be made by those who served unto the shadow of heavenly things; the latter has almost no ritual at all. No ordinance of the earlier economy is preserved without change in the later. No rule as to meats and drinks, divers washings and carnal ordinances, imposed until the time of reformation, is taken up by the new economy and laid on the necks of believers for all time. The handwriting of ordinances that was against us has been blotted out. The Jewish nation may indeed have been typical of the spiritual Israel or kingdom of Christ, just as the Jewish sacrifices were typical of Christ, the Lamb of God: but it would be as unsafe

to infer the organization of a Christian church from the national organization of the Israelites as it would have been to infer the manner of Christ's death from the manner of slaying a lamb by the Jewish high-priest. Bearing in mind, then, the difference between the two economies and the natural dependence of language in every age upon previous or existing usages and institutions, we are not surprised that the Old Testament fails to describe beforehand with literal accuracy the polity and working of a Christian church; much less are we surprised at the impossibility of deriving the rites of the new dispensation from those of the old. Evidently, so far as the Bible is concerned, we are remitted to Christ and his apostles for light on all questions of church order and action. And as to extra-scriptural teachings, we shall hardly be expected to go far in search of it while the word of God is intelligible, and the language of Chillingworth is remembered: "The Bible, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants."

Another of these principles is, that the constitution and work of Christian churches

are definitely fixed by the New Testament. It is not true, we think, that the writings of the apostles authorize us to look upon the constitution of a Christian church as elastic, variable, discretionary, capable of being adjusted by the wisdom of officers or members to the ever-changing tastes and conditions of society. Christianity has indeed a spirit and a form, a soul and a body; but they are perfectly and divinely fitted to each other. If one of them suffers, the other suffers also. If the spirit degenerate, the form will be perverted; if the form be injured, the spirit will languish. Their mutual sympathy and dependence may not always be manifest, but they surely exist, and will in due time appear. The records of Christianity in every age prove this. And we are satisfied that the New Testament nowhere authorizes Christians to adapt their ecclesiastical polity and action to the institutions, the prejudices, or the genius of any people or epoch. It rather makes it their duty to offer the world the same Christianity, both in spirit and form, which they find delineated by apostolic men. To found the church was the work of

Christ and his inspired followers. The former prescribed the qualifications for membership, and laid down the rule of discipline for private offences; the latter organized numerous churches, administered the ordinances, attended to the appointment of suitable officers, and gave important directions as to the discipline of public offenders.* And thus, by inspired example and teaching, was the proper constitution of Christian churches determined for all time. On this point the writings of Paul are very instructive. He took care to ordain elders in every church which he planted; he insisted upon the maintenance of faithful discipline in the churches; he evinced by his conduct great respect for church action and authority; he proclaimed the value of unity, order, co-operation, in every church; he exhorted Christians to remember, obey, and support their pastors; he exalted the custom of all the

* Matt. xvi. 18, sq.; xviii. 18; Jno. xx. 23; Eph. ii. 20; Rev. xxi. 14.—Matt. x. 32, sq.; Luke xiv. 26, sq.; Matt. xxviii. 19: Mark xvi. 16; Jno. iii. 3, sq. —Acts xiv. 23; xviii. 8; Tit. i. 5; 1 Cor. v. 1, sq.

churches to the position of a moral law for believers; he affirmed his own directions in respect to order and decorum among the brethren to be commandments of the Lord; and he declared that his teaching, not only of doctrine, but also of duty, was the same in all the churches.* Hence it is manifest that Paul attached no little importance to the proper organization and action of the churches. Nothing was left to accident or the caprice of uninspired men. The body was fitly framed together; and it is only necessary to examine with care the words of this one apostle in order to ascertain the normal constitution and functions of a Christian church.

Another of these principles is, that churches observing the Lord's Supper must determine what are the scriptural qualifications for admission to it. The ordinance is placed in their hands with instructions, and

---

* Acts xiv. 23; Tit. i. 5.—1 Cor. v. 1, sq.; 2 Thess. iii. 6.—Acts xiv. 26, 27; xv. 2, 3.—1 Cor. xii. 12, sq.—Heb. xiii. 7, 17; Gal. vi. 6.—1 Cor. xi. 16.—xiv. 37.—iv. 17.

it is practically impossible for them to observe it without interpreting those instructions. They spread the table for their Master, and they must also invite the guests. They may say: "The New Testament authorizes us to welcome to this feast all men, or all believers in Christ, or all members of Christian churches;" but having prepared the supper, they cannot well say: "Our responsibility now ends; certain terms of admission to this table are laid down, we believe, in the New Testament, but it is a delicate point, and we forbear to indicate them; let every man do what is right in his own eyes, freely partaking, if he thinks himself entitled to do so." This would be saying: There is instruction in the New Testament which the churches of Christ may pass over in silence; they are indeed, "the pillar and ground of the truth," and should proclaim the terms of baptism, of membership in the church, of admission into heaven, but it is not their duty to explain the terms of communion at the table of the Lord; this portion of the revealed will of God they may forbear to teach, although it is often misun-

derstood. Such a position is wholly untenable. No man would assume it except by necessity. But if churches observing the Lord's Supper must determine what are the scriptural qualifications for this ordinance, manifestly they can only invite those to partake of it who are believed to possess these qualifications. If the scriptures in their judgment make true faith in Christ a term of admission to the Lord's table, they cannot invite those who give them no satisfactory evidence of having such faith. If baptism is made another term by the same authority, they cannot invite those who are believed to be yet unbaptized. In all cases the invitation must express the views of doctrine and duty held by those who give it. For they have no right to make the opinions of others their standard of action. They have no right to place honest error on the same level with truth, overlooking the sacredness of the divine law, and regarding only the sincerity of the human subject. Wrong does not become right, nor falsehood truth, because it is believed to be so. Christians should not, therefore, treat any man as

if he had obeyed a command of the Saviour when they believe he has not obeyed it, for by so doing they disparage the objective divine rule; nor should any man wish to receive from them such treatment, for it is wishing them to honor his profession at the expense of Christ's command.

Another of these principles is, that Baptists ought to follow out their doctrine of baptism, if correct, to its legitimate results. If they are right in holding that nothing but the immersion of a believer into the name of the Trinity is Christian baptism, they may fearlessly accept all the consequences of this belief. Loyalty to Christ will bring with it no real unkindness to his friends. Obedience to one of his directions will not be found to violate any other. All his commands are harmonious, and no possible conditions of society can make them discordant. To believe them harmonious, when Christianity is in a normal and healthy state, as in the apostolic age, is not enough; they are equally so, it must be admitted, when the people of God are in a partly disorganized state. For true charity does not consist in assenting to

every opinion, and indorsing every act of a fellow Christian, but in thinking no ill of his purposes, and seeking to rectify his errors. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." Paul was not uncharitable when he "withstood Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed." The very plainness and boldness of his reproof betokened large confidence in the radical integrity of his brother apostle. So, likewise, a strict obedience to the law of baptism, with all it involves, although it may separate a part of Christ's disciples from the rest, at certain points, and may give birth to discussion and admonition, is yet entirely consistent with fervent charity between those who differ. It may not, indeed, be so easy for Christians to obey all the laws of their Master, when some of them have mistaken the path of duty, and discord seems to reign, as it would be if all were of one mind, walking visibly in the same path; but nevertheless, it is possible, and, therefore, no servant of Jesus can plead his desire to obey one command as a valid excuse for not obeying another. If, then, Baptists are correct in

their views of baptism, they ought not to hesitate in accepting and justifying the consequences; but if wrong in their views of baptism, they are doubtless wrong in the consequences also. The latter error, however, grows out of the former, and must be corrected through it, if at all. We claim, then, that the following argument establishes the duty of "close communion" on the part of Baptists, provided the immersion of believers, in the name of the Trinity, and nothing else, is Christian baptism. This is believed to be true by all consistent members of the Baptist denomination. It is plainly the logical and, if true, the scriptural basis of their practice of restricted communion. Having stated these principles, we have reached the main question, and shall proceed to consider, from a Baptist point of view, what are the scriptural prerequisites to communion at the Lord's table.

CHAPTER II.

PREREQUISITES TO COMMUNION.

FAITH IN CHRIST IS THE FIRST PREREQUISITE. Only true Christians are entitled to partake of the supper, and only those who give credible evidence of piety should be invited to partake. In support of this position, we appeal:

1. To the import of the ordinance itself. It is partly commemorative. "This do in remembrance of me." "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." It is a memorial of the dying Redeemer, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. The breaking of the bread and the pouring out of the wine carry the heart back to Calvary, and bring before it the spotless victim in his passion. But those who have no spiritual connection and affinity with Christ, no trust in him as their atoning sacrifice, or love to him as the Holy One, cannot feel any proper interest in the sacred mementos of

his passion. They are at heart self-righteous. They do, in fact, reject his proffered aid, and repudiate his atonement. Whatever admiration they may feel for him as a man or a teacher, they feel no gratitude to him as a Saviour. How, then, can they heartily commemorate his death, or be entitled to celebrate that event in company with his friends? To put the question is to answer it.

Again, it is partly symbolical. "Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you." "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." It will be observed that the act of eating and drinking the consecrated elements is made very prominent. And with reason; for by partaking of the bread and wine, the communicants signify most clearly their reception of Christ by faith as the support of their spiritual life. They profess to be united with him, as the branch is united with the vine, and to draw from him, as their Sacrifice and Redeemer, present supplies of grace. If not; if the sole object of the supper is to commemorate the dying Saviour, without symbolizing

any special relation of the communicant to him, why does the former partake of the elements at all? Why is it not enough to break the bread and pour out the wine in sight of all the people? The act of eating and drinking is altogether unmeaning and superfluous. But if this act signifies the reception of Christ by faith and a vital union with him, then it is most significant and essential. An omission of it would rob the ordinance of more than half its meaning. Hence we say that the Lord's supper was intended to symbolize and express the believer's relation to Christ. How, then, can any person who rejects the Saviour wish or dare to approach his table? Or how can one who gives no satisfactory evidence of faith in Christ be invited to his table?

It is also partly typical. "I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down (at table) with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the

Lamb." From these and similar expressions of the word of God, it appears that the Lord's Supper was meant to foreshadow the blessed fellowship of heaven. With what propriety, then, can those who lack the one indispensable qualification for that fellowship be welcomed to the communion? It is evident, therefore, from the import of this ordinance, that faith in Christ is the first prerequisite to it. In support of this position we appeal:

2. To the example of Christian churches in the apostolic age. So far as the point in question is concerned, their practice seems to have been uniform. The sacred emblems were never offered to unbelievers. All notices of this ordinance in the New Testament favor the opinion that those, and those only, who gave credible evidence of faith in Christ were admitted to the supper. Some have referred to the case of Judas as an exception, but without sufficient reason. For it is probable, if not certain, that he went out to accomplish the betrayal of Christ before the supper was instituted; but if he remained with the rest, and partook of the Lord's supper, it was in the character of a

true disciple, the omniscient Saviour alone perceiving his hypocrisy.

Is, then, the example of churches under apostolic guidance of any weight in the present case? We believe it is. When Paul declares with reference to a practice far less closely connected with the gospel than this, "We have no such *custom*, neither the churches of God," he appears to regard this fact as a final, *ne plus ultra* argument against it. Yet, in the case to which he refers, it is impossible to determine whether the custom of the churches rested on special instruction from the apostles, or on their own sense of propriety and modesty. But the practice now in question must have been established by the apostles. They received the ordinance from Christ, and they caused it to be observed in the primitive churches. Whatever may be urged in favor of the opinion that they suffered certain prevalent evils to exist for a time in the churches, trusting to the general principles of Christianity, and the spirit of love which it created for their ultimate removal, it cannot surely be supposed that by their own positive agency they

established any but right customs. Hence the fact that believers only, according to the records of the New Testament, were welcomed to the Lord's Supper in the apostolic age, is ample proof that such only should now be invited. As faith in Christ was then prerequisite to communion, it must still be prerequisite. In support of this position we appeal:

3. To the caution which Paul gave to the Corinthians. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup,"—words which imply the necessity of personal preparation for the ordinance. In what this preparation consisted may be learned from the context. Paul had just spoken of the supper as a memorial of Christ and a proclamation of his vicarious death, adding that "whoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord;" and soon after, as a reason for self-examination, "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." That is to say: Whoever does not appreciate

the sacrifice of Christ, and feel his need of it as an atonement for sin, whoever does not receive Christ with love and trust as the source of spiritual life in his soul, is unprepared for the Lord's Supper; if he partake, it will be unworthily, not discerning the Lord's body; he will eat and drink judgment to himself. It is not to be supposed that such language as this was uttered by an apostle who deemed it proper for unbelievers to partake of the Lord's Supper. Had the Corinthians been taught by Paul, when he was with them, to invite or admit to the communion any persons who were held to be unregenerate and incapable of spiritual discernment, they would have been astonished at the words cited above, and compelled to look upon his teaching by letter as irreconcilable with his teaching by voice.

For these reasons, in brief, we maintain that faith in Christ is prerequisite to communion with him at his table. It would not be difficult to strengthen our argument for this view, but we deem it unnecessary. The treatise of Jonathan Edwards on "The Qualifications for Full Communion," and his "Re-

ply to Mr. Williams," render an elaborate discussion of the point superfluous.*

But if churches observing the Lord's Supper may invite to this ordinance only those who give to them satisfactory evidence of piety, it is plain that Baptists cannot welcome the members of Episcopal, Lutheran, Unitarian, or Universalist churches, as such, to the communion. For it is well known that persons are freely received into churches of all these denominations who do not profess to have experienced a change of heart. It is known that persons christened in infancy are presumed by many Episcopalians and Lutherans to have been regenerated thereby and are therefore, at a suitable age, admitted by confirmation to full membership in the church. It is known that views of depravity and regeneration are entertained by Unitarians and Universalists quite unlike those of evangelical Christians, and accordingly that many are received into their fellowship who cannot in the judgment of charity be es-

* The Works of President Edwards, Vol. I. p. 81, seq. New York; Leavitt and Allen. 1856

teemed pious. Hence, Christians who believe in the new birth, and reject the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, are unable to regard membership in any of these churches as suitable evidence of piety. They are ready to acknowledge that large numbers of true believers* may be found in the four denominations just mentioned,† but they cannot look upon the terms of admission to church fellowship in either of them as being suitable tests of their faith, nor can they presume that men are real Christians merely because they have borne such tests. The consequences are obvious. It is impossible for Baptists,

---

* By the expression "true believers," used above, we mean persons whose hearts have been renewed by the Spirit of God, and not persons who are believers of the truth in its purity and fullness. In the ranks of Unitarianism, etc., there are those who not only give evidence of love to God, but also declare their faith in Christ as the Saviour of sinners. To such we refer, however far they may be from an orthodox belief.

† We shall not, of course, be understood as placing these four denominations on a level, either as to the correctness of their theological opinions, or as to the power and purity of their Christian influence.

with their present views of faith in Christ as prerequisite to the Lord's Supper, and of the proper fruits and evidences of faith, to invite members of the denominations named above to this ordinance. To do so would be to trample on their firmest convictions of duty, and pay respect to the opinions of men at the sacrifice of loyalty to Christ. They are not, of course, expected or desired by any thoughtful Christian to do this.

CHAPTER III.

BAPTISM IS THE SECOND PREREQUISITE.

ONLY baptized believers are entitled to a place at the Lord's table, and such only can properly be invited to partake. To justify this statement we shall consider:

1. The relation of the two ordinances to each other as symbols. It is generally admitted, we suppose, that Baptism symbolizes the beginning of the new life, and the Lord's Supper its furtherance. The former speaks of change from one spiritual condition to another, from moral pollution to moral purity —putting off the old, putting on the new, dying and rising again in fellowship with Christ, and so taking a new position under the government of God—while the latter speaks of growth, progress, power, in a present condition. The one represents a single event, a sudden transition, a consecration of its subject to a new service and master, while the other represents an ever-recurring duty, refreshment and joy. "For as many of you

as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." "*As often* as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." The life of faith must be originated before it can be nourished; and an ordinance which represents the inception of this life must naturally precede one which represents its existence and support. In baptism a sinner publicly renounces the service of Satan, and declares his allegiance to Christ; at the Lord's table he takes his place among the acknowledged friends of Jesus, and receives from him the tokens of love and favor. Can there be any doubt as to the order in which these sacred rites should be observed? Shall a rebel appear at the king's table and recline in his bosom before he has publicly abjured his wickedness and avowed his future loyalty? Shall he be formally recognized as a citizen before he is formally qualified for citizenship? It is plain to us that the import of baptism makes it prerequisite to the communion, that one who neglects or refuses to observe the initiatory ordinance has no right to observe the subsequent ordinance. Salvation, indeed,

depends upon neither of them; *fides integra secura est de salute*;* yet an orderly observance of these rites is a solemn duty, and a neglect of them grievous disobedience. To justify our statement we may consider:

2. The practice of Christian churches in the apostolic age. Beginning with the inspired record at the day of Pentecost, and tracing the history of Christians until that record closes, we find no hint of the presence of unbaptized persons at the Lord's table, no intimation that they were ever invited to commune. But we do find that baptism is treated as the first great duty to be performed after exercising faith in Christ, and that the Lord's Supper, if noticed at all, is assigned to a later period. When the multitude cried out on the day of Pentecost: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter replied: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you;" and "they that gladly received his word were baptized." After this "they continued steadfast in the apostle's doctrine, and in fellowship, in breaking of bread and in prayers." So, too, the people of Samaria, "when they

* Tertullian, De Baptismo.

believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, were baptized, both men and women." With equal promptness were the eunuch, and Saul, and Cornelius, Lydia and her household, the jailor and all his, baptized when they had believed. It is said, also, that "many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized."* If, then, the history of apostolic labor given in the Acts, puts any one point beyond the reach of controversy, it is this: that baptism followed the exercise of faith as its primary and authorized expression. In no case is the Lord's Supper put before baptism; in no case does the narrative recognize any interval between faith and baptism to be filled by the Lord's Supper; in no case are believers brought into the church and afterward baptized. The order appears to have been one and the same in every instance, and baptism always preceded the communion. On this point the testimony of the scripture is unequivocal; and if apostolic precedent can be relied upon as

* Acts ii. 38, sq.; viii. 12, 36, sq.; ix. 18; x. 46 sq.; xviii. 8

a guide to duty, we may be sure that baptism is prerequisite to communion at the Lord's table.

But to this it has been objected that some of the eleven who were present at the institution of the supper, had never been baptized at all; that none of them had received Christian baptism, and hence that Christ, whose example has more authority than the practice of any number of apostolic churches, did not make baptism a term of admission to his table. It will be necessary for us to examine the several points of this objection.

And, in the first place, is it reasonable to conclude from the tenor of the gospel narratives that some of the twelve were never baptized? We think not. Two of them at least, and possibly all, had been disciples of John the Baptist prior to their connection with Jesus. When it is remembered that large numbers of the Jews resorted to John for baptism, that he admitted to this privilege those who bore the fruits of repentance, and that he directed their thoughts to a greater one about to appear, even "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," it is

natural to infer that the most truly religious of the people became his disciples, and that from this class the Saviour chose his personal attendants. And the probability of this inference is strengthened by the promptness with which the latter forsook all and followed Christ. It may, indeed, be supposed that they were drawn to Jesus by a special divine power, which acted without regard to any spiritual preparation in them; but this hypothesis is hardly plausible. John was sent expressly to prepare the way of the Lord; and it may be presumed, in default of any evidence to the contrary, that individuals whose hearts had been prepared by his preaching were selected by our Saviour to be his personal attendants. Again, it appears from the fourth Gospel, that Jesus, by the hands of the twelve, baptized those who became his disciples.* And if it was his custom to have his disciples baptized, it may be taken for granted that he did not make the case of his most eminent followers an exception. Those who believe that he did, should have positive evidence for their

* Jno. iii. 26; iv. 12.

opinion. "Order is heaven's first law;" and surely it must have pervaded the action of him who came down from heaven. If, then, any of the twelve were not baptized by the harbinger of Christ, they doubtless submitted to this rite when they left all to follow Jesus. It may also be worthy of remark, that those first called by him were disciples of John;* as such they had been baptized already, and were therefore qualified to administer the ordinance in a regular way to others. The words of Peter, too, when the disciples were about to fill the place made vacant by the death of Judas, may have a bearing on the question before us. "Wherefore, of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, *beginning from the baptism of John* unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." It is further to be remembered that Christ himself was baptized in order "to fulfill all righteousness." This last expression may

* Jno. i. 35, sq.; Luke v. 1, sq.; Mark i. 16, sq.; Matt. iv. 18, sq.

have a far deeper sense than some have supposed, but it certainly *includes* a fulfillment of all the rites and duties of religion. And such was the relation of baptism to Christ's work and his people, that it was necessary for him to receive it. But if he himself and his disciples generally were baptized, we must conclude that the twelve also were baptized, previous to the institution of the holy supper. The indexes all point in the same direction, and there are no real grounds on which to rest a different conclusion. If moral evidence is ever satisfactory, it should be in such a case as this.

But, in the second place, was John's baptism virtually Christian baptism? This is denied by the objection before us. Christian baptism is supposed to have been first authorized by the Great Commission, and to have been first administered on the day of Pentecost. Hence, none of those who were present at the institution of the Lord's Supper had received it. We are aware that many distinguished scholars approve this view, but the following reasons constrain us to reject it: The ritual act of baptism was

the same before and after the death of Christ —expressed by the same word, and performed in like circumstances. It is safe, therefore, to conclude that its symbolical import was the same. If it represented the new birth, or purification of soul, when administered by Paul, it probably signified the same when administered by John the Baptist If the ordinance, as used by John, had not been understood to symbolize an inward change—the beginning of a new spiritual life—it could hardly have been adopted by Christ to represent such a change. But we are not left to inference on this point. The qualifications for baptism suggest its meaning as a symbol, and these qualifications were virtually the same before and after the ascension of Christ. "John did baptize in the wilderness and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." His language was: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance." "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance." And the words of Peter to those who "were pricked in their heart," were: "Repent and

be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." Moreover, the Lord himself had said to his disciples: "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached, in his name, among all nations." Did the word "repentance" mean one thing in the mouth of John, and another thing in the mouth of Peter? Can any but genuine repentance secure the remission of sins? Or can there be genuine repentance without a radical change of heart, without the new birth in which the soul begins a life of spiritual obedience? We are confident that John insisted upon that "repentance which is unto life, and which needeth not to be repented of," as prerequisite to baptism. Hence, he repulsed the Pharisees and Sadducees, saying: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance." But this radical change of the moral state, or disposition of the soul, which was required alike and equally by John the Baptist, by

Christ himself, and by his chosen apostles, involves every spiritual grace. It can no more exist without faith than memory can exist without thought. Indeed, the virtues of the new life are not simply bound together by strong affinities; they are vitally and inseparably united. Contrition, faith, and love interpenetrate, pervade and qualify each other. The presence of one is the presence of all, and the absence of one is the absence of all. They are fruits and evidences of regeneration always in a cluster. But "repentance" is a comprehensive term, signifying, properly, conversion as a spiritual change, and including all the principles of the new life. It is faith, love, contrition, taking the place of unbelief, hatred of God, and hardness of heart. It gives, in one word, the essential condition of baptism. And this renovation of heart, baptism, as a ritual act, symbolizes—in what way we are not required by our present theme to show.

But the change effected at the moment of the new birth is one of relation and position, even more than of character. The subject of it is thereby united with Christ, who was

delivered for our offences and raised for our justification. By fellowship, a partnership with Christ in his death and resurrection, he is put in a new relation to the law of God. In the person of his substitute, with whom he becomes identified at regeneration, the claims of that law have been met and honored, the just penalty of sin has been borne, and he has been raised to a state of justification before God. In this sense, the change is complete, effected once for all. As Christ died and rose from the dead but once, completing then and there the work of atonement, so the subject of the new birth passes once for all from a state of condemnation to a state of justification, from the category of the unjust to the category of the just. And this is fitly symbolized by the rite of baptism. We are buried with Christ in baptism, wherein also we are raised with him to a new life. We are baptized into his death.* And this death and resurrection stands at the beginning of the new life. Without it no man can now be saved. Without it no man was

* Col. ii. 12; Romans vi. 3.

ever saved. It was as necessary before the death of Christ, as it is since that event.

Far be it from us to undervalue the full light of the gospel. We do not, however, claim for those who had true repentance before the day of Pentecost as much knowledge of Christ as was possessed by Christians afterward. But we do claim that the difference between the former and the latter was a difference of knowledge, and not of spiritual state; that both were accepted servants of God, and believers in the Messiah, and that both were alike *in* the kingdom of God. For the Saviour himself declared: "The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it."* The faith of the former class was more general, but not less real than that of the latter; they were looking and waiting for the Messiah, ready to receive him in all his offices, and they were baptized, not without distinct reference to faith in him when revealed. John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance,

* Luke xvi. 16, cf. Matt. xi. 13; Mark i. 1, sq.

saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him that is, on Christ Jesus. It is also worthy of note that John taught them to expect, with the Messiah, extraordinary operations of the Spirit: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." Three topics, then, were the staple of his preaching; namely, repentance toward God, faith in the coming Messiah, and the miraculous agency of the Spirit. How much light he was able to shed on these Christian themes it is not for us to say, but more, certainly, than any earlier prophet. We know, however, that he demanded evidence of a change of heart—which change prepared the subjects of it to receive the full doctrine of Christ and the Holy Spirit—as prerequisite to baptism, and that he intimated very distinctly the peculiar office of each. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," and "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." Hence, we infer that those disciples whom Paul found at Ephesus, had neither been taught nor baptized by John himself, but by some rash follower of his; and especially, as the

reason for their re-baptism seems to have been their ignorance of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. Whatever, then, may have been the formula made use of by John in administering baptism, we believe that the ordinance was essentially Christian, and that, as a general rule, those who had received it from him, as well as those who had received it from the disciples of Christ, were admitted, as properly baptized, to Christian churches, on and after the day of Pentecost. Many of the "three thousand" were perhaps thus added to the company of avowed Christians in Jerusalem.* The wonders of the Pentecost, and the words of Peter, may have fully opened their eyes, for the first time, to the fact that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, and that he was now baptizing his disciples with the Holy Ghost.

It may be remarked, further, that Christ himself was baptized by John. Yet he observed the ordinances of the new economy

---

* Act ii. 41. The writer entertains this opinion himself, but is not sure that any of his brethren approve it.

as well as those of the old, "leaving us an example that we should follow his steps." Says Turretin: "The baptism of Christ should be no other than the baptism of believers, because he is the Head, and believers are the members; because it was proper for him to sanctify the use and sacrament of our baptism by his own; because baptism is a symbol of the unity of believers in one mystical body (Eph. iv. 5), not only with one another, but also with Christ, the Head (1 Cor. xii. 13; Gal. iii. 27); and because his circumcision was identical with the circumcision of the Jews." Locus XIX., Quaestio XVI.

But if it were probable, as it is not, that some of the eleven who were present with Christ at the institution of the supper, had never been baptized, we should nevertheless look to subsequent example for light concerning the duties of believers generally. The calling and position of the apostles were extraordinary, and what they were permitted to do in such a case cannot safely be urged as a precedent against what they taught others to do. The uniform practice of be-

lievers under their instructions must be held conclusive of their judgment as inspired men upon the question in debate; and this uniform practice, as we have seen, puts baptism before communion at the Lord's table. It is to be considered:

3. That Christians of every name, from the apostolic age to the present, with hardly a dissenting voice, have declared baptism to be a prerequisite to the Lord's Supper. It would be easy to produce ample proof of this statement, but we deem it unnecessary. The only protest worthy of note has been made by a portion of the English Baptists. Moved by a desire to receive all whom Christ has received, they have overlooked the marks of distinction between visible churches on earth and "the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven," and have assumed that all who belonged to the latter should be welcomed to the highest privileges of the former. Forgetting that Christ has nowhere identified the terms of admission to his favor with the terms of admission to a local church, they have closed their eyes to the example

of apostolic believers, and have marred the order and symmetry of the Lord's house. However noble their spirit and purpose, they have placed themselves in a solitary and false position, a position which we think they will ere long abandon, to resume their place with the great body of believers, who maintain that baptism is prerequisite to the Lord's supper.

Our second statement, then, is justified by the symbolical meaning of the two ordinances, by the uniform example of the primitive churches, and by the common judgment of Christendom. But if it is correct, the duty of Baptist churches is obvious. They must welcome to the Lord's table only those whom they suppose to have been baptized. For if it is evident that no man should expect to be saved at last, unless he believes that he has complied with the terms of salvation, and that no church should endorse and encourage his expectation, unless it shares his belief; or, in other words, is satisfied of his compliance with those terms; it is equally evident that no Christian should deem himself entitled to the communion

unti. he believes that he has complied with the scriptural terms of admission to this ordinance, and that no church should invite him to commune unless it shares his belief, or is satisfied that he has complied with those terms. Hence, Baptist churches can invite those only who have been immersed in water on profession of their faith, to partake of the Lord's Supper. Should they welcome to this sacred rite those who were sprinkled on profession of their faith, or those who were merely christened in infancy, they would deliberately trample on what they hold to be the law of Christ; for, while they look upon such persons as still unbaptized, they believe baptism a prerequisite to communion. But it is well known that all other evangelical churches not only make use of sprinkling or pouring instead of immersion, but also administer the rite to infants; it is therefore impossible for Baptists to invite the members of these churches, as such, to the Lord's table. However heartily they may accord to them faith in Christ, the first qualification for communion—and most heartily, we are confident, they do this—they are

compelled to pronounce them destitute of the second, which is baptism; and, therefore, mindful of the paramount claims of Christ, they refuse to modify or disturb the order of his house. Such is their true position; and the readers of this work will doubtless recognize it as identical in principle with their own. Yet an opinion prevails to some extent among those who have not duly considered the point, that the act of partaking together of the Lord's Supper is a proper sign and test of Christian fellowship, so that the faith of one who is not invited to partake is called in question. This act would indeed be such a test, if faith were recognized as the sole qualification for communion; but not otherwise. If baptism is understood to be also prerequisite, then obviously uniting at the Lord's table is a sign of fellowship in the matter of baptism as well as of faith. The ritual qualification is endorsed no less distinctly than the spiritual. Hence, members of the denomination for which we now speak, honor the faith of multitudes whom they cannot invite to the Lord's Supper, and utterly disclaim the use of this ordinance as a

sign or test of simply Christian fellowship. Might not this fact be more distinctly acknowledged than it is by some of their assailants? But to proceed:

CHAPTER IV.

THE LAST PREREQUISITE.

An orderly church walk is the last prerequisite None but members of some Christian church, whose "conversation becometh the gospel of Christ," and who "strive together for the faith of the gospel," should be invited to the communion.

In support of this position we remark:

1. That becoming connected with a Christian church naturally precedes partaking of the Lord's Supper. It has already been shown that baptism is properly the first public act of consecration to God and his service. By submitting to this rite, one solemnly avows his faith in the triune God, and his purpose to obey him in all things. He takes his place under the banner of Christ, and pledges himself to have no other master. And what next? The great army is made up of companies, one here and another there, and he can have no regular connection with it unless he joins one of these companies, unless he

enters a particular church. Uniting with a local church is therefore the immediate sequence and, as it were, the natural counterpart of the baptismal vow. Hence the latter is often called "the door into the church," and membership is supposed to follow it as a matter of course. There are, to be sure, exceptional cases; persons are sometimes converted and baptized where there is no church, and when they are unable for a time to become members of one. This was true, we suppose, of the eunuch whom Philip baptized. But such instances do not affect the general rule. It is still true that in all ordinary circumstances church membership follows directly after baptism; certainly it precedes admission to the Lord's table. Besides, it must be borne in mind that partaking of the holy supper is an act to be repeated until the close of life, while uniting with a Christian church is an act to be performed but once, unless a repetition is made necessary by local changes. At what point of time then shall the church relation be established? Surely not at the close of one's Christian life and service, nor in the middle of that service, but

obviously at the beginning of it. No good reason appears for assigning it any other place.

In support of our position we remark:

2. That the Lord's Supper is a church or dinance. It was meant to be observed and administered, not by individual Christians at will, nor by irresponsible companies of believers, but by the churches of Christ as such. This statement is justified by the language of Paul to the Corinthians. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? Because it is one bread, we, the many, are one body; for we all partake of the one bread." . . . . . "When ye come together in church, I hear there are schisms among you; and I partly believe it. . . . . When, therefore, ye come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper; for in eating each one takes before another his own supper." . . . . . ' Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise ye the church of God, and put to shame them that have not?" . . . . . "So then, my brethren,

when ye come together to eat, wait for one another. If any man is hungry, let him eat at home, that ye come not together to judgment."* Several points of great interest are fixed by these words of the apostle:

In the first place, the Corinthian Christians were evidently accustomed to "meet together" in order to observe the Lord's Supper. No less than four times within the space of a few verses does Paul connect their coming together in one place with the celebration of the eucharist. This was their custom; there is no hint of any irregularity; it was their uniform practice. Whether they commemorated the death of Christ daily, or weekly, or monthly, we are not told, but the language cited above makes it certain that they always met together for this service. Indeed, it seems to have been the proper and avowed object of their assembling. Although the way in which some of them partook of the love-feast before the eucharist betokened little respect for the latter, they met professedly, without doubt, to eat not their *own* but the

* 1 Cor. x. 16, 17; xi. 18, 20, 21, 22, 33, 34.

Lord's Supper. No other view explains the repeated and emphatic manner in which their "coming together" is connected with this ordinance.

In the second place, they could not properly observe it without coming together. This is not said, but implied. Many things could be done by Christians separately. "Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?" "If any man is hungry, let him eat at home." But it does not seem to have entered the apostle's mind that the *Lord's* Supper could be eaten at home. No word of his letter intimates the propriety of such an act. There were parties, factions, rivalries, in the church at Corinth. Some were for Paul, some for Apollos, and some for Cephas. Selfish and contentious men fomented discord in presence of the speaking emblems. The rich slighted the poor, and the poor envied the rich. Their solemn feast had become a grief and a scandal. Was there no group of lowly disciples who met in some upper room to receive with reverent and thankful hearts the memorials of their dying Lord? No church within the church, bound together by ties of holy fel-

lowship, to observe apart the precious ordinance? Has not Paul, who was so careful to "praise" the Corinthians for their good conduct, spoken of at least one such faithful group? Not a syllable does he breathe of such a company or service. Instead of this, his language firmly points to the whole body of Corinthian believers as presenting themselves at the Lord's table. Fixing his mind on the members of this body, he says: When ye come together in one place, it is not to eat the *Lord's* Supper — your professed, as it should be your real, object—but, as your conduct shows, it is for each one to eat his *own* supper, which might have been taken at home. Again, being present with them in spirit, he explains, in one respect, the import of communion: Since the consecrated loaf is one bread, we, the many, are one body; for all of us—οἱ πάντες—partake of the one bread. By signifying thus our union with Christ, and dependence on him for spiritual life, we signify our union with one another, and the church of many members is represented as one body. According to these passages, the eucharist was observed by the collected

church, and no abuses which might attend such an observance of it, could justify individuals or families in celebrating it at home.

In the third place, the Christians at Corinth came together "in church" to observe the holy supper. When Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians, the word ἐκκλησια (*ecclesia*) had already become the appropriate designation for an organized body of Christians. It was either applied to the whole company of believers, in every age, or to a local church, as that of Antioch. In the passage before us, it must be used in the latter sense; a sense which it generally has in this Epistle. Hence the words ἐν ἐκκλησία (*en ecclesia*) signify, in church form or capacity, and give evidence that the Corinthian believers celebrated the Lord's Supper as a church. This view of their meaning is confirmed by a clause in the context. Rebuking some of his readers for their conduct when together, he says: "Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God?" In other words: There are two possible explanations of your conduct; either you have no houses in which to take your

daily food, or, if you have them, and yet feast yourselves in church, you certainly despise *the church of God.* The apostle, be it observed, does not say, "the Christian brethren;" to despise them were indeed a grave offence, but he says, "the church of God," a very different expression; and by it he means "the church of God at Corinth"—an organized, responsible body, entrusted with the duty of exercising discipline, and preserving in their purity the ordinances and worship of Christ's house.* It would have been no small sin for the Corinthian Christians to treat each other with disrespect as individuals, but it was a far greater crime for them to despise the order, authority, and good name of the church—a divine institution and society, responsible under Christ for the conservation and diffusion of his truth until the end of time.

Plainly, then, the Lord's Supper was observed by the saints in Corinth as a church,

---

* See 1 Cor. i. 2; vi. 4; x. 32; xi. 16; 2 Cor. i. 1; viii. 1, 18, 19, 23, 24; xi. 8, 28; xii. 13. Also, 1 Cor. v. 4, 5, 11, 12, 13; ii. 6, sq.

and any disorderly or selfish conduct attending it was not only a grief to individuals, but an act of contempt to the church as such. This appears to be the obvious meaning of Paul's language. Bearing in mind, then, the repeated statement that the Corinthian disciples "came together" to observe the Lord's Supper, the clear intimation that they could not observe it properly without coming together, and the plain testimony that they met in "church" to observe it, we feel ourselves authorized to say that they broke bread as a church, and treated the Lord's Supper in all respects as a church ordinance. It is therefore needless to examine further the apostle's words on this point. But it is important to remark that, in no other instance, has an inspired writer spoken at length of the manner of celebrating the Lord's Supper in the primitive churches. If the New Testament anywhere indicates, with special clearness, the practice of those churches planted and trained by the apostles, it is in this passage. Every other reference to their practice is comparatively brief and indistinct.

Yet every other reference serves to confirm the view which has been taken of this.

One of them reads thus: "And on the first day of the week, when we were assembled to break bread, Paul preached to them—about to depart on the morrow—and continued his speech until midnight."* To whom did Paul thus preach at Troas? To the members of the Christian church in that city, we reply; and for such reasons as follow: They were deeply interested in the apostle's discourse, listening quietly until midnight. No opposition was raised, no disturbance created; a young man fell asleep during the service. We read of no conversions, no first fruits of the gospel in Troas, as the result of this protracted address. Moreover, the meeting was on the first day of the week, and Paul seems to have tarried seven days, that he might be present. It may therefore be presumed that they were accustomed to meet on that day for worship and the breaking of bread. Indeed, every line of the narrative reminds us of an assembly of Christians. Besides, Troas

* Acts xx. 7.

had been visited twice before by the apostle, once on his way, for the first time, to Europe, and again in the period which elapsed between the writing of his first and second letters to the Corinthians. Both these visits were brief, yet not, perhaps, without fruit. Of the first, nothing is said which either warrants or forbids the hypothesis of his making known the gospel to some in that place. Luke appears to have joined him there. Of the second, he thus writes: "When I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ, and a door was opened unto me in the Lord, I had no rest for my spirit, because I found not Titus, my brother; but, taking leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia."* Now, if there were not previously a church in Troas, this language implies that he preached there long enough, at least, to learn the state of the city, and the attitude of its inhabitants toward the gospel. Some were doubtless converted, and, according to the uniform practice of the apostle, were presently brought together in a church. From these disciples he separated

* 2 Cor. ii. 12, 13.

himself with great reluctance, impelled by his anxiety to see Titus, and learn the condition of the church at Corinth. With such hints on record, all conspiring to show that there was a goodly company of the faithful in Troas, we have ample grounds for believing them to have been associated in church order and fellowship, maintaining Christian worship on the Lord's day, and observing the ordinances of the gospel. If they had not been thus united, would Paul have tarried there a full week, and then left them again, without setting in order the things that were wanting, and ordaining elders in that city?* It is evident, then, that the apostle broke bread with a Christian church in Troas, and that the narrative of this event by Luke strengthens our argument from the language of Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians.

Turning back, now, to the beginning of apostolic labor at Jerusalem, we have another record of similar bearing. With a few words inserted, to bring out the sense more distinctly, it reads thus: "On that day there

* Acts xiv. 23; Tit. i. 5.

were added" to the company of Christian disciples "about three thousand souls; and they applied themselves constantly to the teaching of the apostles and the communication" of alms, "the breaking of the" sacramental "bread, and the" social "prayers."* These Christians were baptized; they were under the guidance and teaching of the apostles; they met together almost daily for social worship; they provided for their poor with great liberality, and they were living in the same city. Were they not, then, to all intents and purposes, a Christian church—a distinct, organized, responsible body, prepared to act in concert upon all matters of discipline and common interest? If not, when did they become such a body? A community of baptized believers, under common instruction, and united in worship—what is it but a church of Christ? Indeed, it is expressly called by this name, only a few verses further on. "And the Lord added

* Acts ii. 41, 42. See Professor Hacket's note on this passage.

to the *church** daily such as should be saved." And after this record of their breaking bread together, they are habitually spoken of as "the church," "the church at Jerusalem."† But the Christians at Jerusalem, it may be replied, did not meet together and observe the Lord's Supper as a church; for they are described as "breaking bread from house to house." This objection is more plausible than conclusive. For whether the words κατ' οἶκον (*kat' oikon*) signify "from house to house," or, rather, "at home," "in private houses," instead of in the temple, no evidence can be gleaned from this expression that the Lord's Supper was intended for the use of Christian families, or social circles, as such. The circumstances of the church at Jerusalem were peculiar. Although believers in Christ

---

* The words τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ are probably genuine, though wanting in a few of the best manuscripts.

† The Scriptural Terms of Admission to the Lord's Supper. By Rev. A. N. Arnold, D. D. Boston: Gould and Lincoln. We take pleasure in referring to the work of Dr. Arnold as an almost perfect statement of the grounds of restricted communion, as practiced by the Baptists.

were suffered to meet with others in the temple for worship, it would have been manifestly improper, if not impossible, for them to celebrate the Lord's Supper there. By so doing they would have been sure to inflame the wrath of the Jews, and make the courts of the Lord's house a theatre of strife and blasphemy. It may be taken for granted that they could use neither temple nor synagogue for any service distinctly and visibly Christian. Hence, if they wished to act as a separate community, they had to meet in some place of their own. *Meyer* thinks they had a common meeting-house from the first which is referred to by the words κατ' οἶκον (*kat' oikon*). This certainly may have been the case. But if it was not, if they had no one place large enough to receive them all, and, therefore, met in several places to break bread—one or two of the apostles presiding over each assembly—this provisional arrangement might not have caused the holy supper to be esteemed a family or a social rite; it might have existed without violating the principles which were to be plainly expressed by the regular working of the church. The

essential points were guarded. Only those who had been baptized, and were walking together in the faith of the gospel, partook of the supper. The emblems were not carried out of the church. They were not used at pleasure by families or groups of brethren. There was oversight, order, harmony, cooperation. In short, we conclude, from the narrative of Luke, that the Lord's Supper was observed by the saints in Jerusalem as members of the church.

CHAPTER V.

THE INSTITUTION OF THE SUPPER.

FINALLY we come to the institution of the supper by our Saviour himself. Many were the persons in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, who had believed in Christ and had been baptized. We read of "above five hundred brethren" by whom he was seen at once, after his resurrection. Many of these brethren were doubtless in Jerusalem at the passover when the eucharist was instituted. But they were in no proper sense a church, a distinct responsible body, called out from the rest of the nation, and acting together as the servants of Christ. "For the Greek word" ἐκκλησία (*ecclesia*), "which expresses the idea of evoking, calling out, also suggests that of convoking, calling together, and is therefore most appropriate to the Christian church as a select, organized body, called out by divine choice from the mass of men, and called together by divine authority as a spiritual corporation."* But,

* Alexander on the Acts, Vol. I. p. 96. Compare *Litton* (E. A.), The church of Christ, etc., Chap. IV. p. 203, sq.

on the other hand, the little band of disciples, to whom the supper was first administered, were essentially such a body. They had been summoned to his side by the Saviour's voice; they were his recognized and constant followers; they were under his instruction, and stood forth the champions of his cause; they had a common purse and a faithful treasurer; they were united in belief and in action; in a word, they were, in all important respects, a Christian church, a responsible community, separate from the world and associated in the service of Christ.

Thus the other notices of the Lord's Supper in the New Testament confirm, rather than weaken, the evidence afforded by Paul's language to the Corinthians, that this ordinance was intended for the churches, as such, and was administered in apostolic times to none but members of Christian churches in good standing. "When we read of the baptism of single individuals, as of Paul and the Ethiopian eunuch, there is never any intimation that the administration of the Lord's Supper followed. Even when whole households are baptized, as in the case of Lydia

the Philippian jailor, and Crispus at Corinth, the same silence is observed. But when great numbers were baptized, as on the day of Pentecost, we find them soon after joining in the celebration of the Lord's Supper."* And in all these instances of "breaking bread," there are good reasons for supposing the presence and action of a Christian Church.

It may also be remarked that this ordinance appears to have been restricted uniformly by the early Christians to church members. "This food," says Justin Martyr, "is called among us εὐχαριστία (*eucharistic*); of which no one is allowed to partake who does not believe that what we teach is true, and has not been bathed in the bath (λουσαμένῳ τὸ . . . . λουτρόν) for the remission of sins and unto regeneration, and does not live as Christ has enjoined."† Three prerequisites are here laid down; namely, faith, baptism, and an orderly walk; and, with few exceptions, Christians of every name, from the apostolic

* Dr. Arnold, Terms of Admission, etc., p. 39.
† Apol. I. c. 66.

age to the present, have agreed in this matter with the contemporaries of Justin.

It seems to us, therefore, unnecessary to say more in support of our third position. In view of the qualification last named, an orderly church walk, the Baptists of this country do not, for the most part, feel themselves at liberty to invite to the Lord's table those members of other churches whom they look upon as unbaptized. As the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance, they hold that none but members of the church observing it are strictly entitled to partake, and that none can properly be invited to join with them in the service, who could not be welcomed, without change of views, to full membership. They also hold that those who are giving, and pledged to give, the weight of their influence against what is believed by a church to be essential in doctrine and practice, cannot properly be received into its fellowship. If admitted, they would sow the seeds of dissension, and thus prove themselves "heretics" in the primitive sense of the term. By receiving them the church would pull down with one hand what it is

holding up with the other. Thus those members of Pedo-baptist churches to whom we now refer, do steadily affirm and teach, by their ecclesiastical position, that infant sprinkling is in effect Christian baptism, or else that baptism is not prerequisite to full membership and an orderly walk in a Christian church. In either case, they throw the whole weight of their example against the doctrine of believer's baptism; a doctrine which, in the judgment of Baptists; is essential to Christian obedience, as well as to the perfect organization and highest purity of the church. How, then, can their church walk be endorsed by the latter as orderly? Is it believed to be so? Were the members of any Baptist church to act as decisively in some other way, against this doctrine, would they not be esteemed by their brethren subverters of the truth and originators of division? And, the church being right in its doctrine, ought it not to withdraw its fellowship from them as walking disorderly and not after the gospel? "Now I beseech you, brethren," says Paul to the Romans, "mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine

which ye have learned, and avoid them."* But if a Baptist church ought to withdraw the hand of fellowship from those who set themselves firmly against the duty of obeying what it deems a plain command of Christ, has it a right to offer this hand to the same persons as soon as they are united with another church, or to any persons who assail persistently the duty in question? But one reply is possible. If communion at the Lord's table were a sign of Christian fellowship merely, the case would be entirely different; Baptists would then gladly invite all who give evidence of faith to partake with them. But such a sign it can never be while, besides faith, baptism and an orderly walk are the scriptural terms of admission to the Lord's Supper.

Before closing this discussion, it is proper to remark that several Baptist ministers and churches in this country do not insist upon the third qualification named by us. Believing that faith and baptism are the only prerequisites to communion laid down in the

* Rom. xvi. 17. Comp. Tit. iii. 10; Gal. v. 12; 1 Cor. i. 10.

New Testament, they feel themselves at liberty to invite all baptized believers to partake with them of the sacred emblems. Our reasons for rejecting their view and practice have been already given; for the brethren themselves, however, we cherish the highest esteem.

From what has been said, it appears that the principles which require Baptist churches to limit their invitation to the Lord's Supper to Christians of their own faith and order are identical with those which determine the action of other evangelical churches in this matter. Hence we cannot perceive the fitness of calling their practice "close communion." In principle it is as open as that of most orthodox churches; as open as the New Testament allows them to make it. We freely admit that it is "restricted"; and so it must continue to be while the example of apostolic Christians and the authority of inspired men retain their hold on the conscience; but we see no good reason for pronouncing it "close."

In reality, the great question between other denominations and the one for which we have endeavored to speak, relates to the

subjects and the rite of baptism. A mor careful examination of this question may perhaps, in time, by the blessing of God, bring together those who now differ; and if it does, whether by a change of belief on the part of Baptists or by a change on the part of Pedo-baptists, the former will be relieved of a duty, the performance of which occasions them far more sorrow than it does others—the duty of restricting their invitation to the Lord's Supper to members of Baptist churches. Such a "consummation is devoutly to be wished." May God hasten it by revealing his truth to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ! Then shall we rejoice, not only in Christian fellowship, but also in sacramental fellowship.

SCRIPTURAL COMMUNION.

BY

J. B. JETER, D.D.

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA.

PHILADELPHIA:
AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
1420 CHESTNUT STREET.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1871, by the
AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,
In the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

INTRODUCTION.

THE following treatise on Scriptural Communion was written in numbers, and printed in the editorial columns of the *Religious Herald*, with a view to its ultimate publication in a more permanent form. The reader will naturally desire to know why it was written, and we will endeavor to gratify that reasonable curiosity.

The subject is of great intrinsic importance. The Lord's supper is of divine appointment, and is wisely and graciously adapted to promote the piety, happiness, and usefulness of his disciples. Its scriptural observance is closely and inseparably connected with wholesome church discipline. As churches become

unsound in doctrine, loose in morals, and negligent in government, they grow more "liberal" in their communion. The barriers to the Lord's table are gradually removed, until the world is turned into the church and the church is turned into the world. If churches would retain their purity and efficiency—not to say their vitality—they must carefully keep the Lord's supper as it was instituted by Christ and celebrated by the primitive saints.

The importance of the subject is augmented by the fact that our (Baptist) views of it are the point against which our opponents direct their heaviest batteries and their most impetuous assaults. This is not surprising. With close communion, as it is called, Baptist churches must eventually stand or fall. If we would perpetuate our denominational existence, we must contend firmly, earnestly, and vigorously for this article of the faith which we have received from the Lord.

The teaching of the Bible is so plain on the subject of baptism that young converts, almost universally, if left to the dictates of their own understandings, deem it their duty to be immersed. It is necessary, therefore, to resort to some means to prevent their defection from Pedobaptist ranks. A direct discussion of the subject of baptism is not deemed expedient. Pedobaptists of learning, piety, and reputation have made so many concessions in regard to both the subject and the act of baptism that they are greatly embarrassed in maintaining their cause. They adroitly aim to create a diversion by attacking close communion. As this practice has, to those who examine it superficially or with prejudice, the appearance of exclusiveness and bigotry, and as appeals in opposition to it may be addressed to the feelings rather than to the intellect, it is found to furnish a most convenient means of stifling convictions of duty in reference to baptism, and of turning

inquirers into Pedobaptist communions. It is of no consequence that they adopt the principles which logically lead to restricted communion. This fact is ignored in their appeals. They continually affirm that they admit the validity of our baptism, while we do not admit the validity of theirs; they invite us to their communion, but we repel them from ours. Their liberality is held up in contrast with our exclusiveness, and the young converts, whose warm hearts would lead them to commune with all mankind, are persuaded that it is most illiberal and unchristian that they should be debarred the privilege of communing with their pious unbaptized kindred and friends. These remarks are not, we are pleased to say, applicable to Pedobaptists indiscriminately. Some have the candor to admit that they hold, in common with us, that baptism is a pre-requisite to communion, and that if our views on the subject of baptism are scrip-

tural, our restricted communion is consistent, right, and commendable.

The agitation of the subject of restricted communion in this country is increased by the extensive circulation of the writings of Spurgeon, who, though a sound Baptist in other respects, is known to be an open communionist. A few—very few—Baptist ministers at the North and in the West have recently publicly avowed open communion sentiments. The subject must undergo fresh discussion. Some may be unsettled in their views on communion, others inquiring concerning it, and yet others need to have their faith more strongly fortified.

A plain, brief tract, for general circulation, setting forth the scriptural relation of baptism and church-membership to the Lord's supper, and the logical consequences of loose communion, seems to be needed at the present time. Against the many valuable treatises on the subject already in circulation we have

nothing to say. Let them be widely diffused and carefully studied. We wrote because the matter presented itself to our mind in a strong and convincing light, and we hoped that a brief statement of our views might contribute to impress on other minds the conviction that we felt ourself. We commend the work to the candid consideration of inquirers after truth and to the favor of God, whose cause we are desiring to promote.

J. B. JETER.

RICHMOND, VA., FEB. 1, 1871.

SCRIPTURAL COMMUNION.

CHAPTER I.

SCRIPTURAL COMMUNION.

By the term *communion* we mean a joint participation of the Lord's supper. We shall limit our discussion to the scriptural qualifications of a communicant and the consequences which logically follow our premises. To these subjects we invite calm, careful, and candid attention.

It will be readily conceded by every person having any respect for the Lord's supper that all men are not qualified to partake of it. The question naturally arises, Who is to judge of their qualifications? To this inquiry two answers may be given:

1. Every communicant must be the supreme judge of his own fitness.

This plan, and only this, secures *free communion*. It imposes no restraint on any one whose judgment or inclination prompts him to partake of the Lord's supper. Greater *liberality* than this none can desire. Let us, however, consider the legitimate consequences of this scheme of communion. It nullifies church discipline, placing it beyond the power of a church to exclude from her communion any member, however corrupt his principles, flagrant his crimes, and odious his character. It places the Lord's table without the pale of the church and within the domain of the world, and must inevitably lead to its desecration. Whoever will—from motives of superstition, vanity, selfishness, or profanity, as well as from motives of piety—may approach it without hindrance from church or State. A table thus unguarded and prostituted is not the Lord's table. "Ye cannot," says Paul, "drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." 1 Cor. x. 21. It may be asked, Does not the apostle say: "Let a man *examine himself*, and so let him eat of that bread," etc.? Cer-

:ainly; but this language was addressed, not to men of the world, but to "the church of God" which was at Corinth. 1 Cor. xi. 28. Church-members were exhorted to receive the communion with self-scrutiny, lest they should receive it to their own condemnation.

2. Every church is authorized to judge of the qualifications of her communicants.

The exercise of this ecclesiastical right constitutes what is called *close communion*. It may be more or less restricted, but every church in Christendom, Catholic or Protestant, orthodox or heterodox, imposes some terms of communion—places some restraints on access to it. The door may be opened wide, but the wall of separation between the church and the world is not entirely demolished. No church, however liberal, or rather loose, its views, will invite impenitent horse-thieves, gamblers, and prostitutes to its communion. All churches, then, to a greater or less extent, are *close communionists*.

Restricted communion is right. Christ has invested his churches with authority to exercise discipline over their members. An incorrigible church-member is to be treated as

"a heathen man and a publican." Matt. xviii. 17. The church in Corinth was commended for debarring from her communion an incestuous member. 2 Cor. ii. 6. Paul lays down the law on this point clearly: "I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat." 1 Cor. v. 11. The preceding verse shows that the apostle had reference, not to social intercourse, but to church communion, in this prohibition; but if the language be understood of social eating, certainly it forbids promiscuous eating at the Lord's table. It cannot be maintained that those who were forbidden to eat socially with the ungodly were at liberty to commune with them. We need not farther discuss this point. A church not authorized to protect its highest and most sacred intercourse from the intrusion of the profane and the licentious is in a pitiable condition of imbecility and exposure.

By what *standard* should churches judge of the qualifications of their communicants?

They should judge, not by their own tastes, feelings, or prejudices, but by the Scriptures. In settling this point, the question should be, not, What thinkest thou? or, How feelest thou? but, How readest thou?

Repentance, faith, and a holy life are moral qualifications of communion, admitted, by most evangelical Christians, to be required in the New Testament. Baptism and the Lord's supper are both positive institutions. They derive their authority, not from their perceived adaptation to promote men's spiritual interests, but solely from the revealed will of the Lawgiver. Repentance is right, and commanded because it is right: baptism and the Lord's supper are right only because they are commanded. Both these institutions are precisely what the will of Christ made them. Their connection with each other, if any exist, is an instituted connection. Whether, in their administration, baptism should precede the Lord's supper or the Lord's supper baptism, or whether one shall take precedence of the other, must depend entirely on the divine will; and what that will is, can be learned only from the Scriptures. In the settlement

of the question Reason has an important part to perform, but her office is, not to sit in judgment on the wisdom or value of these institutions, but simply to inquire and decide what Christ has revealed concerning them.

CHAPTER II.

BAPTISM PRECEDES COMMUNION.

We are now to inquire whether Christ established any connection between baptism and the supper. We maintain that, in the order of their observance, he ordained that baptism should have priority, and that the apostles and their co-laborers invariably observed this arrangement.

INSTITUTION OF THE SUPPER.

The supper was instituted on the night previous to the Lord's crucifixion. The institution of baptism was of prior date. John, the forerunner of Christ, received it from heaven (Luke xx. 4, 5), and Christ honored and confirmed it by his example. The differences between John's and the apostolic baptism were circumstantial and not essential. Only the apostles partook of the supper at its institution. Of their previous baptism, though we have no express information of it,

there can be no reasonable doubt. They would scarcely have failed to imitate the example of their Master, sanctioned, as it was, by a voice from heaven and the visible descent of the Holy Ghost. Those who were not baptized of John rejected "the counsel of God against themselves" (Luke vii. 30); and it can hardly be supposed that Christ selected his prime ministers from this disobedient class. Besides, the disciples of Christ continued the work of baptism after John's ministry began to decline in popularity, and they surely did not refuse to be baptized themselves. John iii. 30 and iv. 2. It is then as clear as any point in theology need to be that the first participants of the supper had previously been baptized. We do not lay any stress on this point, but present these remarks merely to obviate any objection that might arise against our main position on the ground that the first recipients of the supper had not been baptized.

THE COMMISSION.

The apostolic commission, as recorded by Matthew, is as follows: "All power is given

unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Chap. xxviii. 18–20. This great commission is substantially given by Mark xvi. 15, 16, and by Luke xxiv. 47, 48, but only by Matthew is it fully and formally recorded. Never was a more solemn, important, and responsible commission conferred on mortals. Christ had recently risen from the dead; had shown himself to the apostles by infallible signs; for forty days he had been speaking to them "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God;" and now, as he was about to ascend to heaven, he committed to them the weighty and glorious task of continuing and completing the work that he amid toil and sufferings had commenced. Every word of this document was selected and all its terms were arranged by infinite wisdom for the infallible guidance of the apostles in their arduous work.

Three things they were required to do: 1. To teach or make disciples of the nations; 2. to baptize the disciples; and, 3. to indoctrinate the baptized. The order of these duties was as clearly prescribed as the duties themselves. To invert or neglect this order was to set at naught the authority of the Lawgiver. The arrangement was perfectly simple. Converts were to be baptized, and baptized converts were to be instructed to observe all the commands of Christ. One of these commands was to partake of the supper. This arrangement not merely places baptism before the supper, but makes the observance of the latter dependent on the observance of the former. Baptism precedes the supper as evidently as teaching does baptism.

It may be objected that by this mode of reasoning it can be shown that prayer, giving alms, and other moral acts, are not obligatory previously to baptism. We reply: Before the institution of baptism and the Lord's supper moral duties were binding on men. They spring from the moral law, and are of force on all persons, everywhere and at all times. But baptism and the supper are in-

stitutions of the new dispensation, obligatory only on such persons and in such forms and order as the Lord, by express terms or by fair implication, has prescribed. No order of moral duties is appointed in the law or in the instructions of Jesus, but in positive duties depending on statutory laws the order of their observance is pointed out.

APOSTOLIC PRACTICE.

How did the apostles understand their commission? This we may best learn from their acts. We turn then to the Acts of the Apostles, or the inspired record of their deeds. Their first labors under the commission were at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Christ had commanded them to remain in that city until they should "be endued with power from on high." That "power" they received when, by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, they were guided into "all truth," and qualified to confirm their testimony by "signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost." A multitude came together, attracted by "a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty

wind" that accompanied the divine baptism. To this assembly Peter preached with such clearness and pungency as extorted from many the anxious inquiry, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" It was a momentous question, and it received an inspired answer. "Repent," said Peter, "and" do what? not join the Church, not partake of the Lord's supper, but "be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine," or instruction, "and fellowship and in breaking of bread," or partaking of the supper, "and in prayers." Here it is evident that the apostles followed the order prescribed in the commission. They made disciples, baptized them, took them under their instruction, and received them to the Lord's supper, which is described as the "breaking of bread," that being a notable thing in the feast.

Having seen the interpretation that the apostles placed on the commission as indi-

cated by their practice under the most solemn circumstances, we shall find that all their subsequent acts were in harmony with it. When the evangelist Philip went down to Samaria and preached Christ to the people, those who believed or became proselytes were baptized, both men and women. Acts viii. 12. They were doubtless subsequently formed into a church, and then partook of the supper, but on these points we have no specific information.

The Ethiopian treasurer, a Jewish proselyte, having attended one of the national feasts in Jerusalem, was returning homeward with his caravan. He was met by Philip, who preached to him Jesus and instructed him in the gospel. The nobleman promptly requested to be permitted, not to partake of the Lord's supper, but to be baptized. Professing a hearty faith in Christ, the evangelist baptized him. When or under what circumstances he partook of the supper we are not informed. Acts viii. 26–40.

Saul of Tarsus, divinely arrested in his mad career of persecution, was taught by Ananias the way of salvation, became a dis-

ciple of Christ, was promptly baptized, and afterward received the communion. Acts ix. 10–18.

Cornelius and his friends were the first Gentiles admitted into the church. Peter, by divine direction, preached the gospel to them. "The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word" in attestation of their believing it, and they were immediately, by the apostle's command, "baptized in the name of the Lord." Their partaking of the Lord's supper was a privilege concerning which they were no doubt properly instructed, and which in due time they were permitted to enjoy.

Paul, who received his commission not with the twelve apostles, but directly from heaven, understood it precisely as they did. In the city of Philippi he and his companions commenced their European labors. Here Lydia and her household were first proselyted, then baptized, and subsequently received to the Lord's table. The same order was observed in regard to the jailer and his family. Paul and Silas spake to them the word of the Lord, and when they believed they were baptized "straightway," and after-

ward, though we have no specific information on the subject, they were indoctrinated and permitted to approach the Lord's table. Acts xvi. 13–34. In Corinth the apostle followed the same divinely-established order. "Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized;" and subsequently, as we learn from the epistle to the church at that place, they ate the Lord's supper.

We have now examined every passage in the Acts of the Apostles which has any material bearing on the point under discussion, and from the examination it is indisputably clear that the apostles and their co-laborers invariably baptized disciples, and then taught "them to observe all things whatsoever" Christ had "commanded" them, among which things the Lord's supper occupied a place, and this arrangement was followed so frequently as to preclude any reasonable supposition that it was accidental.

CHAPTER III.

APOSTOLIC INSTRUCTION.

We are now to inquire what light the apostolic epistles shed on this subject. The First Epistle to the Corinthian church is the only one, so far as we have noticed, that contains any specific directions concerning the observance of the Lord's supper. This epistle was addressed, not to the people of Corinth, but to "the church of God" which was at Corinth, to them that were "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints." We might reasonably infer from the uniform practice of the apostles that the members of the Corinthian church had all been baptized, but we are not left to any uncertain inference on this point. We are expressly informed, as has already been noted, that when Paul and his companions first preached the gospel in that city, "many of the Corinthians, hearing, be-

lieved, and were baptized." What was true of the first converts was true of all the subsequent accessions to the church. In his epistle to them the apostle takes their baptism for granted: "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." vi. 11.. The washing of the members of the Corinthian church, distinguished alike from their sanctification and their justification, can mean, as it seems to us, nothing but their baptism. This is an outward, ritual washing, symbolic of a moral one, as said Ananias to Saul, "Arise, and be baptized, and *wash away thy sins.*" In this interpretation of the passage most commentators concur.

To the church, then, at Corinth, composed of baptized believers, Paul gave particular directions as to their communing at the Lord's table. These instructions are contained in the tenth and eleventh chapters. The supper was manifestly *a church feast.* "The cup of blessing which we bless," or for which we give thanks, "is it not the communion," or joint participation "of the blood of Christ?" that is, of the wine metaphorically called his

blood? "The bread which we break, is it not the communion," or joint participation, "of the body of Christ?" that is, of the loaf which symbolizes his body? "For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are *all partakers of that one loaf*" broken in the feast. So important did the apostle deem this *joint participation* in the supper that he urged the brethren when they came together to "break bread," to defer the service until all the communicants could be present. "Wherefore, my brethren," said he, "when ye come together to eat"—the Lord's supper—"tarry one for another." The members of the church were solemnly guarded against a profanation of the supper, and exhorted to partake of it with self-examination. xi. 27, 28. Guided by the apostolic instruction in these chapters, we are forced to the conclusion that the Lord's supper was a feast spread, not for the world, or for mere inquirers after truth, but within the church and for her members; that the conditions of communion and of church-membership were precisely coextensive; and that the Lord's table was fenced around by all the laws and all the dis-

cipline which had been ordained to secure the purity of the church.

The Scriptures teach as well by their silence as by their announcements. What is not revealed, is not an article of faith; what is not commanded, positively or by fair implication, is not a duty. The Scriptures are silent as to any administration of the Lord's supper, except to churches in their organized capacity. They furnish no intimation of private communion. They give no account of the communion of the unbaptized. No man, taking the Bible for his guidance, would ever suspect that the supper is any other than a church feast, or that any but church-members are entitled to partake of it.

WISDOM OF THE DIVINE ARRANGEMENT.

We see the divine wisdom in the order of baptism and the supper. They are both symbolic ordinances. Baptism is the initiatory rite of the Christian church. It denotes the beginning of a new, spiritual life (Rom. vi. 4), the profession of fealty to the Lord Jesus. Gal. iii. 27. The supper is symbolic of that spiritual food which Christ provides

for the nourishment of the new life. "As the living Father," he says, "hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Yet he tells the Jews: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John vi. 57, 63. How appropriate it is that the ordinance which symbolizes the beginning of spiritual life should precede that which is emblematic of the food by which this life is sustained and developed! It is not strange that God, who delights in order, should make his positive institutions harmonize with nature, and symbolize in their order the birth, nourishment, and growth of the new man.

THE ARRANGEMENT NOT NEW.

The making the observance of one rite depend on the previous observance of another was no new arrangement in the divine government. Circumcision and the passover occupied, under the Mosaic dispensation, places similar to those filled by baptism and the Lord's supper in the Christian economy The latter rites are not strictly substitutes for

the former. These institutions belong to systems differing widely in genius, spirit, and design. Infant baptism can no more be inferred from infant circumcision than can infant communion be deduced from the fact that infants partook of the passover. Circumcision was the initiatory rite of the Mosaic dispensation. No Gentile could be admitted into the "commonwealth of Israel" without it, and no lineal descendant of Jacob could retain his place in it if he neglected the rite. No male was permitted to partake of the passover, one of the great national feasts, who had not been circumcised; "for no uncircumcised person," said the Lord to Moses, "shall eat thereof." Ex. xii. 48. It might have seemed hard and exclusive to the Israelites that their uncircumcised friends and children should be excluded from a national festival, that celebrated their deliverance from bondage; but so was the will of God, and it was wise and beneficent. In making baptism a pre-requisite for communion, Christ did but adopt a principle previously sanctioned by divine authority and familiar to the Jews, among whom he labored.

GENERAL AGREEMENT.

There is no question of practical theology concerning which professing Christians are so agreed as that baptism is a pre-requisite of church-membership and communion. Romanists and Protestants, Lutherans and Calvinists, Episcopalians and Presbyterians, Baptists and Pedobaptists, however they may differ as to the subjects, mode, design, and efficacy of the ordinances, unite, with few exceptions, in maintaining that baptism is an indispensable qualification for receiving the communion. It would be easy to cite proofs on this point, but they may be found in abundance in almost all our works on this subject. The denial of the position has been almost entirely limited to modern open communionist Baptists, whose logical necessities have impelled them to dissent from the established faith of Christendom, and to some of the minor Christian sects, whose looseness of principle has led them to an almost entire abandonment of ecclesiastical discipline. Apart from the discussion of the question of restricted communion, no earnest Christian, it

appears to us, would ever doubt that by divine appointment baptism precedes communion. Did men seriously believe that their salvation is suspended on keeping the ordinances as they were delivered by the apostles to the primitive churches, not one in a million, perhaps not one on earth, would fail to observe baptism preparatory to communion.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHAT VIEW SHALL PEDOBAPTISTS BE INVITED TO COMMUNE?

We have endeavored, and we think successfully, to show that under our Lord's commission, and according to the instruction and example of the apostles, partaking of the Lord's supper was restricted to church-members; and church-membership, to baptized believers. We take it for granted in this discussion that Baptist churches are constituted on the scriptural plan. Let us now inquire whether churches organized after the inspired model can scripturally invite Pedobaptists to their communion.

If a Baptist church invite them to their communion table, it must be under the notion either that *they are baptized* or that *they are not baptized.*

1. Shall we invite them to the communion under the notion that *they are baptized?*

To admit the validity of their baptism would be to stultify ourselves—to subvert our distinctive denominational principles. If sprinkling, infant sprinkling, is valid Christian baptism, then there is no need and no authority for Baptist churches, and the sooner they are annihilated the better. But we cannot admit that sprinkling or pouring is baptism.

When we consider that all lexicographers of note define baptism primarily by immersion or some equivalent term; that the Scriptures allude to it as a burial; that immersion was, except in cases of sickness, the universal practice of the churches for thirteen centuries; and that the Greek church down to the present time practices only immersion,—we cannot for a moment doubt that the immersion of the body in water is the divinely-appointed baptism. Sprinkling and pouring have no claim on grounds philological, historical, or theological, literal or figurative, to represent baptism.

But suppose we could admit that sprinkling or pouring is baptism, what shall we say of infant baptism? Is that of divine au-

thority? Can that be accepted as Christian baptism? For this we find no sanction in all the oracles of God. Christ did not command it. There is no example of it and no allusion to it in the Scriptures. It cannot be logically inferred from anything recorded by the pen of inspiration.

We cannot, then, consistently with our well-considered and deeply-rooted opinions, invite Pedobaptists to the communion *as baptized persons.* To do so would be to disregard our most solemn convictions, to trifle with truth, and to mock the God of truth.

It may be said that Pedobaptists have been baptized according to their own views of the ordinance, and we should respect their conscientious convictions. We grant it. We do not question their piety or honesty, nor do we impugn their motives. To their own Master they stand or fall. Still, the question presents itself, Shall we, in admitting them to the Lord's supper, be governed by their views or our views of baptism? Shall we disregard the divine law in deference to their opinions and feelings? It might seem very courteous and liberal in us to do so, but would

such a course be pleasing to our Lord? He holds us to individual responsibility. "Every one of us must give account of himself to God." Churches as well as individuals are responsible to him for their practice. If, then, we follow our own settled convictions, as God requires us to do, we can never invite to the communion Pedobaptists under the notion that they are baptized. We have a deep, earnest, and ineradicable persuasion that, according to Christ's will and the apostolic example, they have not been baptized.

Besides, if we should, in deference to their convictions and feelings, invite Pedobaptists to the communion contrary to our views of Christ's law, would it not be equally reasonable that they should abandon the practice of infant sprinkling, which lies at the foundation of our discord, from respect to our cherished opinions? We do not demand this of them. It is better to be conscientiously wrong than hypocritically right. We neither demand of others nor sanction in ourselves a sacrifice of conscience. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

2. Shall we invite Pedobaptists to the com-

munion under the notion that *they are not baptized?*

The Roman Catholic hierarchy claims the right of changing the ordinances of Christ. In the exercise of this assumed power, it has changed immersion into sprinkling in the baptismal rite. Calvin claimed, on behalf of the Reformed churches, the authority to change in some degree the same ordinance.* Baptist churches claim no such right. They deem it their duty to receive implicitly, to interpret honestly, and to obey punctiliously the commands of Christ. He has delegated to his churches no power to dispense with his ordinances or in any way to abridge or modify them. If he then has made baptism a prerequisite to church-membership and communion, no man, no set of men, and no church

* "Acts viii. 38: 'They went down into the water.' Here we see the rite used among the men of old time in baptism; for they put all the body into the water. Now the use is this, that the minister doth only sprinkle the body or the head. . . . It is certain that we want nothing which maketh to the substance of baptism. Wherefore the Church did grant liberty to herself, since the beginning, to change the rites somewhat, excepting this substance."—*Calvin's Com. on Acts*, published by the Calvin Translation Society, Edinburgh.

can, without an assumption of authority in derogation of the honor of the Lawgiver, admit the unbaptized to the supper.

But suppose a church holding Baptist principles were so inconsistent as to invite Pedobaptists to her communion, the invitation, if intelligently and honestly made, would run thus: "Brethren, Pedobaptists, we are, as you yourselves are, firmly convinced that Christ has ordained baptism as a pre-requisite to a participation of the supper; we are equally convinced that you have not been baptized, and have no scriptural right to partake of it; but, respecting your views and feelings more than the authority of Christ, we invite you to the communion." It would be discourteous, perhaps offensive, to offer such an invitation, and certainly it would not, by persons of a keen sense of propriety, be accepted. Yet this is the kindest invitation to Pedobaptists that could be honestly given by a church consistently holding Baptist principles. Communion, following such an invitation, would be a sham, offensive both to God and to men.

With whatever views Pedobaptists may be invited by Baptists to the communion table,

the invitation will, by them and by the world, be held as an admission of the validity of their baptism, or, at least, that baptism is a thing of no importance. We should be promptly and very properly told that baptism precedes communion, and that in receiving them to it we endorse their baptism, or are guilty of a gross inconsistency. All the arguments for mixed communion offered by Pedobaptists pre-suppose the validity of their own baptism, and they neither ask nor desire to commune with us but on the condition that we also shall admit it. Let those who can, with a good conscience, make the admission: for our part, we cannot.

CHAPTER V.

OBJECTIONS TO SCRIPTURAL COMMUNION.

HAVING stated the grounds on which Baptist churches decline inviting Pedobaptists to the Lord's table, we shall now notice some popular objections to restricted communion.

Before, however, we proceed to consider these, we may mention that if our positions in the preceding chapters have been scriptural, no objections against such communion can be of any validity. If Christ, in the exercise of his regal authority, has made the supper a church feast and restricted church-membership to baptized believers, then all objections against limiting communion to church-members and church-membership to the baptized are directed, not so much against the churches that maintain this order, as against the wisdom, goodness, and authority of the Lawgiver. To every objector to the arrangement

we might reply in the language of James: "If thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge." With these preliminary remarks, we will give calm and candid attention to the objections.

1. It is said: "It is the Lord's, and no church can forbid any of his children to eat of it, without an assumption of power and an infringement on their rights."

If it were our table, we might properly consult our taste, interest, or sympathies in inviting others to partake of it, but it is, as the objection avers, "*the* LORD'S *table*." He instituted the feast, and has an indefeasible right to prescribe the terms of admission to it. He has either prescribed these terms or he has not. If he has not, then the table is open to the world; and Jews, Turks, and infidels, as well as Christians, may approach it, from any motive of love, secular advantage, or contempt. If he has prescribed them—and who will deny that he has?—then they are wise, and the interests of piety and the honor of the Lawgiver alike demand that they should be strictly observed. These terms we have endeavored, in the light of Scripture, to present.

These it is the duty of every church firmly to maintain. The Lord's table is spread in the Lord's house, not for all who may account themselves his children, nor for those who may choose, from any motive, to share with them in the feast, but only for his children, who in the divinely-appointed way have been recognized and received into his visible family.

2. It is said: "We hope to commune with Pedobaptists in heaven, and the terms of church communion should not be more rigid than those of admission into heaven."

This plausible appeal is addressed to the heart rather than to the head—to the sympathies rather than to conscience. Has Christ, to whose authority we should all bow, made it a rule that churches shall invite to their communion all persons whom they hope to meet in heaven? Where is it recorded? If such a law exists, it is certainly very comprehensive. We hope to commune in heaven, not only with many Pedobaptists, both Protestants and Catholics, but with many who were never baptized, either in fact or fancy, with a multitude of idiots and infants who will die in infancy, and with many now living

in sin who will hereafter be led to repentance. Shall we open the door of communion to all these? Or, if not, where shall we draw the line of discrimination? The truth is, God, in the exercise of his sovereignty, admits to heaven whom he chooses, and, in the exercise of the same sovereignty, has established a visible church on earth, and has prescribed the conditions on which persons are to be admitted to membership in it and to a participation of its privileges. The most liberal construction of these conditions must exclude many from the church and its communion whom we fondly and confidently hope to meet in heaven; and the sweet anticipation of communing with them there may well reconcile us to the want of any ecclesiastical communion with them that must be secured by violating the law of Christ.

3. It is said, "We admit the existence of Pedobaptist churches and are inconsistent in declining to commune with their members."

Few words are more equivocal than the word *church*. It is thoroughly established in English literature in various senses. We read of the "invisible church," the "Catholic

Church," the "Episcopal Church," the "Lutheran Church," the "Presbyterian Church," the "Unitarian Church," the "Mormon Church," etc., etc., as well as the Baptist Church. We cannot change the meaning of the word, and it would be mere affectation to employ it in a sense not authorized by general usage. The term *ecclesia*, commonly rendered *church* in the New Testament, is also of equivocal import. It sometimes means the whole body of believers, sometimes a worshiping congregation, and sometimes a secular assembly. Acts. xix. 39, 41. Now, it surely implies no inconsistency to call an assembly or an organization a church, either in the popular sense of the English term or in the sense of the Greek word *ecclesia*, and to decline communing with it. It will hardly be maintained that Paul would have broken bread with the mob at Ephesus which cried out vociferously, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" and Luke styles it an *ecclesia*—a church—an assembly.

We speak of Pedobaptist churches, and the language is understood by all persons who do not choose to pervert it. We do not

mean that they are identical with the idolatrous mob at Ephesus or the primitive church at Jerusalem, but they are still churches, assemblies, or organizations separated from the rest of mankind. So far as we conscientiously can, we should sanction their principles and commend their piety and good works, while we faithfully condemn and vigorously oppose their errors. Sound policy, as well as due regard to truth and fairness, demands that we shall pursue this course. Pedobaptist societies are churches; but, in our judgment, they are not formed according to the apostolic model. We give them due credit for their intelligence, piety, and good works; but we have somewhat against them. They have corrupted the ordinance of baptism and subverted the order of church building; and we must neither say nor do anything that implies our sanction of these errors, nor place ourselves in a position in which we cannot bear consistent testimony against them; and in precisely this condition we should put ourselves by the practice of open communion.

4. Again, some say that our obligation to receive all sincere Christians is implied in the

words of Paul: "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." Rom. xiv. 1.

This passage, it seems to us, can have no material bearing on the question under discussion. The epistle containing it was addressed to the "saints" in Rome. The apostle took their baptism for granted. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore *we*"—that is, I, Paul, and you, saints of Rome—"*are buried with him by baptism* into death." Rom. vi. 3, 4. These baptized believers had disputes among themselves concerning the eating of meats and the observance of holy days. These, the apostle decided, were indifferent matters, concerning which freedom of opinion should be tolerated. These differences of views did not affect the piety or usefulness of the saints, or the authority and honor of Christ. The apostle urged them, therefore, to receive those who were weak in faith and not capable of discerning the insignificance of these matters. But baptism and the Lord's supper do not belong to this category. They originated in

the wisdom and goodness of Christ, and are enforced by his authority. To class them with things indifferent is to pour contempt on the divine government. If one command of Christ may be set aside, another may; if a positive precept may be annulled, so may a moral one; and thus his authority may be wholly subverted. His law is not mere advice to be received or modified or rejected at the pleasure of his subjects. "Ye are my friends," he says, "if ye do *whatsoever* I command you."

The text under examination has no reference to communion at the Lord's table. It involves no principle which can fairly be brought to bear on the question of restricted communion. Some weak Christians in Rome were conscientiously opposed to eating flesh, and the apostle urged the brethren to bear with their infirmity concerning this indifferent matter; but it is a grievous perversion of logic to infer from this advice that persons are to be received to church-membership and to the Lord's table who have neglected or perverted the ordinance of baptism.

5. Once more: "Close communion," it is

maintained, "indicates a *bigotry* incompatible with the spirit of the age."

Bigotry is a blind, proud, intolerant adherence to one's religious views. It is an evil confined to no sect, party, or age. It caused the death of the Son of God. It has filled the world with strife, persecution, and blood. We dare not deny its existence among Baptists, and could wish right heartily that its malign influence were limited to them. It is fair, however, to admit that their principles are peculiarly adverse to the spirit of bigotry.

No people more earnestly insist on soul liberty and personal responsibility than they do. They have no fellowship with sponsorial piety. Religious coercion is subversive of their fundamental principles. We feel the importance of guarding most earnestly against this pernicious spirit. We deny emphatically that keeping the ordinances as, according to our view, they were delivered to the primitive churches, in substance and order, without intolerance toward others or superciliousness in ourselves, is bigotry; but if this be bigotry, then we are bigots, and glory in our bigotry. We trust we shall never be moved

from our convictions, our duty, and our consistency by the vague charge of bigotry—a charge that is never preferred with greater zeal than by bigots, and is never more harmless than when it is directed against the advocates of truth.

That restricted communion is incompatible with the spirit of the age, we are not careful to deny. This spirit tends to liberalism, rationalism, and skepticism. It imposes upon us, as Baptists, the duty of guarding with sleepless vigilance those cherished principles which the Lord has entrusted to us, lest, borne away by the strong current of the times, we should prove recreant to our Master.

CHAPTER VI.

INCONSISTENCIES OF LOOSE COMMUNION.

HAVING disposed of some of the most plausible and popular objections against restricted communion, we now purpose to indict, under several specifications, the opposite practice—that is, *loose communion.*

Supposing this practice to be allowable (which we cannot do), we maintain that it is of *little practical value.* We are far from deeming communion at the Lord's table valueless. It is a divinely ordained means of Christian edification, wisely suited to nourish, in pious minds, gratitude and love to the Redeemer, and to strengthen holy resolutions; but all these ends are secured to them by communing in their own churches, or in churches maintaining a common faith and discipline. There is very little intercommunion between the members of churches

approving the practice. It furnishes a fine theme for declamation, when one would extol his own liberality or that of his denomination, but as a matter of fact it is a privilege —if privilege it be—which is not held in high estimation, even by its advocates. In the cities there is scarcely any intercommunion among the Christian sects that plead for it. In country churches the practice is less infrequent than in the cities, but still it is not common, is slightly valued, and sometimes leads to discord and bickerings. It will be conceded, we presume, by candid Christians, that they are very little indebted, if indebted at all, to the practice for their edification, comfort, or usefulness. If it were not a popular theme, having a show of candor and liberality, we should probably hear nothing of it. Actions are louder than words. Those church-members who press to the communion tables of other denominations than their own, as a means of spiritual improvement, are consistent open communionists; all other advocates of the practice simply employ it as a topic on which to display their assumed liberality, in favorable contrast with the im-

plied bigotry of those who oppose it. We have still more serious objections to it.

Open communion *subverts ecclesiastical discipline.* This practice must proceed on one of two theories—either that every person is the sole judge of his qualifications for communion, or that all the members of the intercommuning churches are entitled to come to the Lord's table. The first of these theories entirely abrogates church authority and discipline. Suppose a church adopting it should be so inconsistent as to *excommunicate* a refractory member, of what avail would be its action? The excluded member, differing from the church in judgment and having the sole right to decide on his own qualifications for communing, would come to the Lord's table, and have the perfect right to come, in defiance of the act of excommunication. We knew a case of precisely this kind. A member was expelled, formally and solemnly, from an evangelical church, on account of his undoubted ungodliness. At the communion which followed, the pastor, assuming that every one must decide on his own qualifications for partaking of the supper, gave the

general invitation for all to receive it on their self-examination, and the excluded member, without confession and without evidence of repentance, and in the exercise of his conceded right, annulled the judgment of the church and received the communion. If this theory is correct, church government is a farce and a folly. The line of demarkation between the church and the world is for ever obliterated.

Suppose the other theory be adopted, and none but the members of evangelical denominations be invited to the Lord's supper, then what follows? If different denominations have the same terms of communion, they are essentially one; if they have different terms of communion, they cannot come to a common communion without weakening or destroying the bands of discipline. Take this illustration: One church tolerates dancing among its members, another does not. A member excluded from a given church for dancing may be consistently received into fellowship by a church tolerating the amusement. Now could this member of a more lax church be received to communion in the church from which he

had been expelled without enfeebling its authority and discipline? It would be placed in the attitude of admitting to its communion table members of other churches guilty of offences for which it would excommunicate its own members. So long as churches insist on different conditions of membership they cannot practice open communion without inconsistency and the partial or entire abandonment of discipline.

Should it be said that the discipline maintained in open communion churches refutes our position, we have two remarks to make: *First:* Open communion is a theory but little carried into practice. It does not bear much fruit, because it is not heartily adopted. *Secondly:* churches, as well as individuals, frequently act inconsistently with their principles, but these principles steadily and surely lead to their results. Open communion, by a law that cannot be revoked, is tending to laxity of discipline, liberalism in sentiment, and we will not say what else.

Again, open communion betrays *a strong sectarian spirit in those who practice it.* The very reverse of this position has generally

been assumed to be true. Let us examine the matter. Sectarianism lies in causing schism in the church of Christ. Its unity, not only in faith and spirit, but in government and discipline, is devoutly to be desired. Those who needlessly divide it, or keep it divided, are censurably sectarian. Nothing can justify schism that does not demand a breach of communion. To separate from a church with which we are in fellowship and in which we can conscientiously commune is certainly wrong. Now, the intercommuning churches, by their own admission, have no just cause for a breach of their fellowship and communion. They can come to a common communion table. Whatever their differences in doctrine, rites, government, or discipline, they are not such as to interfere with their joint participation of the supper. Why, then, we inquire, in the name of charity and candor, should they have different tables? Their peculiarities in faith and forms are all such as they can mutually tolerate. Neither the dictates of conscience, nor zeal for truth, nor loyalty to Christ, demand that they should open different and opposing communions.

Their discordant views, as they do not affect the question of communion, are matters for forbearance, conciliation, compromise, and adjustment. It would be a beautiful evidence of a catholic spirit, of a *genuine* liberality, if these discordant sects should, as they might without any violation of conscience, abandon their rival communions and blend in a common one. But how stands the case? These sects maintain their independent and in some respects antagonistic communions with as much pertinacity and zeal as if they deemed their respective *shibboleths* essential to the vitality of the church. In every little village may be found a half dozen intercommuning churches, small, unable to support their pastors, with all the unholy emulation and strife incident to the struggle for pre-eminence. As all can commune in one church, why not have one, by whatever name it might be called, and thus save great expense, promote brotherly love, secure increased efficiency, and set an example of genuine catholicity? To this union there is, so far as we can discern, but one obstacle, and that is *sectarianism*.

From this sectarianism Baptists are free.

They do not cause a schism in the church for reasons which, in their own view at least, do not require a breach in communion. With us the conditions of church-membership and of communion are identical. We bar from membership and the communion the unbaptized, whether they are members of other denominations or candidates for admission into ours. Should we become convinced of the lawfulness of mixed communion, we shall not stop at that point, but consistently advocate the merging of all the intercommuning sects into a common body, with a common creed, common rites, a common government, and a common name; nor shall we be tenacious on points that do not affect the questions of fellowship and communion.

We will mention one more objection to open communion. It tends to the *destruction of Baptist churches.* Mixed communion leads logically and practically to mixed membership, and mixed membership to the gradual abandonment of Baptist principles. The causes of this result may be easily shown. These principles are not congenial with the spirit of the world. In all time, its taste,

fashions, wealth, power, and to a great extent its learning, have been fiercely arrayed against them. They can be maintained and propagated only by earnest and constant appeals to the oracles of God. The moment a Baptist church accepts mixed communion it strikes its colors. It proclaims that immersion and the restriction of baptism to believers are matters of indifference; that on these points it has no creed; and that all may decide them according to their taste, inclination, or convenience. The pastor does not feel at liberty to press on the consciences of his hearers an ordinance of Christ practically ignored by his church. The result of such a course can be easily foreseen. As neither faith nor immersion is essential to baptism; as immersion is inconvenient, unpopular, and non-essential; as infant sprinkling is a graceful, pleasing, and prevalent ceremony and secures the ends of Christian baptism,—is it any cause of wonder that Baptist views and practices should rapidly fall into desuetude? Under the demoralizing influence of open communion the progress of Baptist principles has been greatly retarded in England.

Many Baptist churches, so-called, in that country, have a mixed membership, and some—we know not how many—have, by the operation of the system, become Pedobaptist churches. The church to which Bunyan preached has undergone this change. It is questionable whether the Baptist churches would not have made greater advancement if he, good and able man though he was, instead of being numbered with them, had been their earnest opposer. All who desire the extinction of Baptist principles act consistently in supporting mixed communion; but as we believe them to be true and of great importance, and that it is our duty to contend earnestly for them and to avoid everything by which their progress might be hindered, we enter our solemn protest against open communion.

CHAPTER VII.

INCIDENTAL QUESTIONS.

We close our discussion of scriptural communion with the consideration of a few questions which incidentally flow from it.

1. *Shall we admit to the Lord's supper persons who, having been properly baptized, are connected with Pedobaptist churches, or are unconnected with any church?*

The Lord's supper is a church feast. Only church-members are entitled to receive it. Church communion and church discipline are co-extensive. All the members of a church have a claim to approach its communion table, and the members of other churches of the same faith and discipline may partake of it by courtesy. Baptized persons holding themselves aloof from any church or in connection with Pedobaptist churches are in disorder. Those who voluntarily and persist-

ently refuse to connect themselves with a church are manifestly disobedient. The church is, by God's appointment, the home in which his children are nurtured, the school in which they are trained for heaven. To refuse to participate in its privileges is to dishonor the wisdom, goodness, and authority of its Founder. Those who do so proclaim, as clearly as their conduct can speak, that, however others may need these aids to piety, they are resolved to force their passage to heaven without them. We will not affirm that they cannot be saved—God is merciful—but, refusing to come under the discipline, they have no just cause of complaint if they are excluded from the communion of the church. Thousands treat it as a mere human institution, which they may honor or neglect at their own pleasure; and those who pursue this lax and wayward course can have no just claim to be placed among her children.

Those Baptists who join Pedobaptist churches are not only in disorder, but grossly inconsistent. They say: "We believe that only immersion is baptism, that only believers are proper subjects of the ordinance, that only

baptized believers are qualified church-members, and that Pedobaptist churches are organized on principles essentially wrong;" yet, in the face of these avowals, they abandon a church constituted upon these principles and throw the whole weight of their influence and employ all their energies in support of one based on opposite principles. They are Baptists in sentiment, Pedobaptists in influence. They know the right and pursue the wrong. They make themselves transgressors by building again the things which once they destroyed. In their baptism they bore testimony against infant sprinkling and infant church-membership; yet, in connecting themselves with a Pedobaptist church, they bear testimony in favor of these errors. A Pedobaptist church is not a suitable home for a Baptist; and if he, inconsiderately and inconsistently, make it his abode, he cannot reasonably hope to be recognized as a Baptist and to share in the privileges of the Baptist church.

2. *What shall be done with members of Baptist churches who persistently commune in Pedobaptist churches?*

They should not be treated as if they were vicious or ungodly. They are brethren erring from want of instruction, consideration, or firmness of principle. Having been overtaken in a fault, they should be restored in the spirit of meekness. In dealing with them many motives may be presented to induce them to change their course. To say nothing of the divine authority in the case, while they may deem it their right, they can hardly account it their *duty*, to commune in Pedobaptist churches. There certainly is no law of Christ and no principle of revelation which requires them to do it. The exercise of the privilege —if privilege it be—is not demanded for their comfort, growth in grace, or usefulness. In their own churches, or churches of their own order, they may commune as frequently as their spiritual interests require. They will lose nothing in respectability by a firm and consistent adherence to the faith and practice of their denomination. They should seriously consider whether it is proper for them to persist in a course which grieves their brethren, produces discord in the churches, and hinders the progress and triumph of principles ad-

mitted to be true and important. Usually, faithful instruction or kind remonstrance will induce those who have practiced mixed communion to abandon the practice, and this change should, in general, be satisfactory to their brethren. If, however, these means prove unavailing, it will be almost invariably found that the recusant members are influenced, not by conviction, but inclination, not by conscience, but feeling. In all religious communions, thousands are governed by fashion rather than principle, by interest rather than duty, by feeling rather than truth. Baptists have their share of these time-serving communicants. They are brave Baptists where Baptists are in the ascendant, but they shrink from the avowal of their principles where these are despised or unpopular. If they can elevate their social position, increase their patronage, or improve their prospect for success in life, by concealing or abandoning their principles, the temptation is too strong to be resisted.

In all such cases, arguments, appeals, and discipline are vain. The candidates for popular favor begin by decrying close communion,

as that is an unpopular practice, and end by a cordial affiliation with those whose principles they have professed to condemn. All, however, who, inconsistently with their principles, practice loose communion, do not belong to this class. Some are swayed by their feelings—a desire to commune with their kindred or friends—and a few are tangled in the meshes of sophistry, and conclude that the supper is a means of grace of which the baptized and the unbaptized, the church and the world, may alike partake.

After due forbearance, proper instruction, and affectionate expostulation on the part of the church toward a member who practices open communion, he must be required to choose between communing with those whose principles he accepts or those whose principle he rejects, with Baptists or Pedobaptists. With both he cannot persistently commune, unless Baptists are prepared to yield the principle of strict communion, or, at least, to connive at its violation. If one is permitted to commune with the unbaptized, all must be. If a church allows her members to commune with the unbaptized, for the same reason she

must permit the unbaptized to commune with her members. She is under the necessity, then, of expelling from her communion a member who persists in the practice of oper communion, or of abandoning the New Testament rule of communion. It may be painful to exclude a member from a church for what seems to be an act of piety, but it will almost invariably be found that such a member holds Baptist principles loosely and feels but little interest in their diffusion—in truth, is only a Baptist in name, and will find a more congenial home among those who oppose these principles.

3. *What is the duty of a Baptist who, living beyond the reach of any Baptist church, has no opportunity of communing except with Pedobaptists?*

If the principles which Baptists hold are true, he should firmly maintain them. If communion with the unbaptized is wrong, it cannot be made right by circumstances. If it is improper to commune with an unbaptized society in the vicinity of a baptized one, it is wrong to do it anywhere. An isolated Baptist, then, should lift up his standard.

He may be poor, illiterate, feeble, and obscure, but his principles are divine and invincible. He is not alone, though he may seem to be, in their maintenance. On the pages of inspiration they are inscribed as with a pen of light, and many, in spite of all the prejudices of education, have a strong conviction of their truth. Let this solitary Baptist, instead of lending his influence to the support of what he does not believe, become a nucleus around which those may gather who adopt his views. Truth is mighty, and will prevail. He may live to see a church organized and the cause which he loves flourishing through his fidelity. In any event, Christ is with him, and will sustain and richly reward him in his efforts to maintain his ordinances inviolate.

4. *Should Baptists commune with all the sects that reject infant baptism and practice the immersion of believers?*

In this country several denominations of Christians belong to this category. Some of these sects decline, on conscientious grounds, to commune with Baptists or to permit Baptists to commune with them. Of course we

should not persecute them for their restricted communion. We may live, grow in grace, and ripen for heaven under the deprivation. Other of these sects would commune with Baptists, but Baptists refuse to commune with them. They differ from Baptists, some of them radically, on various points of doctrine, discipline, and aims; and communion not based on substantial agreement can be nothing better than hypocrisy, and is more likely to produce strife than union. With such of these sects as practice loose communion, Baptists, of course, cannot commune without an abandonment of their long-cherished principles, or flagrant inconsistency.

The question of communing with most of the sects of immersionists is not, with Baptists, a practical one. Some, however, think that they may properly commune with Disciples, or, as in some places they prefer to be called, Christians, but who are more generally known as Campbellites. Nearly forty years ago they were separated from Baptist churches for holding unsound religious principles and cherishing a contentious and schismatical spirit. Time and the study of the Scriptures

have wrought a favorable change in at least a portion of the sect. They are less heterodox, less pugnacious in spirit, and are building up the things which once they destroyed. We hope and pray that the time may come when Baptists and Disciples may see eye to eye and be united in spirit, aims, and labors; but that time has not yet come. Until it arrive, Baptists should firmly maintain their ground. Most of the Disciples are, we conclude, open communionists. This practice alone should debar us from their communion. Many of them entertain opinions concerning inherent depravity, the influence of the Spirit in conversion, and the efficacy of baptism which are subversive of evangelical truth and are of rationalistic tendency. Against these errors we must bear a faithful testimony, and this testimony we cannot bear if we commune with them. Whether Baptists should commune with them is a question to be decided not by individuals, or even by a single church, but by the churches in association—by the denomination.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCLUSION.

If Baptists are right in their views of Christian ordinances, they have an important mission in the world. It is to restore those ordinances as they were instituted by Christ, delivered by the apostles, and kept by the primitive churches. This is an important, difficult, delicate, and responsible work. We are Christ's witnesses, and we should do nothing to weaken the force or blunt the point of our testimony. We are not called to bigotry, censoriousness, or strife. It is our duty to love all men, especially those who bear the image of Christ; to render to all due honor for their knowledge, holiness, and good deeds; and to cherish a becoming spirit of humility, modesty, and gentleness; but still to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." If Christ has made baptism a pre-

requisite to communion at his table, as Christians everywhere, with few exceptions, maintain; and if the immersion of a believer is the only baptism instituted by the Lord, as we firmly believe; then there can be no gain to the cause of truth or piety or Christian union by any participation in the supper in which these principles are discarded. If we are right in our views and practice, we are not responsible for any discord and strife to which they may give rise. Let us do our duty, committing our ways to God, calmly bearing all reproach, and we shall have our reward.

THE

CHRISTIAN LAW

OF

UNION IN COMMUNION

A VITAL ISSUE IN

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE,

AND AN ESSENTIAL SAFEGUARD TO

AMERICAN BAPTIST UNITY.

By GEO. W. SAMSON, D.D.

PHILADELPHIA:
THE AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,
1420 CHESTNUT STREET.

THE CHRISTIAN LAW

OF

UNION IN COMMUNION.

Crisis in the Discussion.

When, more than forty years ago, the exciting debate in the United States Senate which threatened national disruption had for many days wandered from the point at issue till passion was stirred by sectional antagonisms, Daniel Webster commenced his comprehensive appeal, which led to union during another generation, by comparing the disputants to mariners who had lost their reckoning in a storm, and he brought all minds to centre on the real point in debate and to realize the hazard of continued controversy by the simple request, "I call for the reading of the resolution."

In this masterly stroke of policy the great American statesman but followed the example of an equally eminent English orator. When,

sixty years before the American debate, the Parliament of Great Britain had become involved in a heated controversy as to taxation of the American colonists, Edmund Burke, in the opening of that speech which set in array the dangers which threatened colonial independence, called for the preamble of the resolution before the House. That preamble began: "Whereas it is *expedient* that a revenue should be raised in America," etc. Ringing the changes on the word "expedient," and demanding why the framer had not written the word *right* instead of "expedient," this greatest of English statesmen, penetrating to the future age of modern thought, intimated that no longer could political policy be allowed to triumph over moral principle, and expediency to take the place of right.

Called to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," Christian advocates may well learn from able statesmen; for as Jesus taught, "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." It may be that in the controversy as to an important ordinance of Christ a well-meant suggestion of *expediency* has thrown into the shade a principle of *right* established by divine law. It may prove that, though a ma-

jority in our mother-land have yielded in mistaken charity a principle hallowed by universal Christian faith and practice, American Christians will hold faithfully that truth which alone can promote Christian grace.

Results of Discussion in the Evangelical Alliance.

The late conference of Evangelical Christians of different denominations and nationalities, held in New York, has hastened to a crisis questions in discussion as to union and communion. Papers read and addresses made by representative men brought out in strong contrast the divergence of view which may result from a generous impulse that overlooks principles universally recognized in Christian history. Without question, the great gathering of the Evangelical Alliance has intensified the desire for co-operation in Christian work. Its immediate result, however, has led in the Episcopal Church to an increased disposition to nonconformity rather than uniformity. In the Congregational Church, the authority of General Councils has been successfully controverted. In the Presbyterian Church, Christian co-operation, as distinct from organic union, is now sought. Discussions in all evangelical churches since the Alliance

have turned on the issue of union and communion, this being a natural result of that conference.

Dr. Hodge of Princeton in his paper entitled "Faith in Christ the only requisite to Christian Union," confounding spiritual with formal communion, declared: "No church has a right to demand more for Christian union and communion than Christ demands to enter heaven." On the other hand, the Rev. Mr. Marston of London, giving a complete analysis of New Testament allusions to the doctrine of "The Communion of Saints," as stated in the Apostles' Creed, showed that the gospel requires unity in Christian spirit rather than in church organization—a view which the dean of Canterbury aptly illustrated in the relation of the Church of England to the various denominational bodies. Dr. Muhlenberg found few to second his suggestion that occasional union communion services would prove a source of Christian unity.

The individual invitations given during the conference to attend union communion services, and the acceptance of the invitations by two or three out of the hundreds who were present, representing different churches, have led to protests from churches whence remonstrance was least expected, and have called forth in many quar-

ters a reconsideration of the generally recognized requisites for admission to the Lord's Supper.

The Spirit Developed in the Communion Controversy.

The persistent effort to draw a portion of the membership of Baptist churches into affiliation with the Free-will Baptist churches of New England, or with the open-communion Baptists of England, calls for a careful notice of the spirit which is developed by controversy. If, under the old dispensation, "mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other," assuredly, in Christ's church, the grace of charity and fidelity to truth need not conflict. But may not the agitation of mind amid late discussions have developed the spirit often produced amid political conflicts? Have the disputants appreciated at all times the conscientiousness of their opponents? Has not the proneness to personal rivalry sometimes overcome sincere love of the truth? May it not be that the great end of all Christian discussion, the advancement of Christ's kingdom, has been too much lost sight of? And may it not be found that therefore the comprehensiveness of divine truth and the perfection of divine grace have not been fully realized?

Mission of Baptists among Evangelical Christians.

Christians of the Baptist denomination have always had, as their distinct mission, to strive for the entire separation of the church from the world. This has called forth three successive efforts. The first was the dissolution of the union between church and state, in which aim all American Christians have come to agree. The second has been the separation of a regenerate from an unregenerate membership by guarding baptism, first in its subjects, and second in its form; the latter of which two efforts all Asiatic and European Christians have recognized as valid, while the former is most appreciated by American Christians, because associated with the theory of a state-church. Their third mission is to guard Christ's second ordinance from the perversions which have arisen as to the first ordinance. This their high calling, to bring back Christians everywhere to the original design of the Lord's Supper as associated with baptism, is worthy of special consideration.

The Aim of the Present Review

Now that the first heat of controversy has subsided, aided by the after-thought which has followed the late excitement, it may be timely to

need the apostolic exhortations, "Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule," and "Follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." If we desire that the communion question or any other topic may be so discussed as to lead to truth, and its harmony be preserved, the order of survey belonging to all successful search for truth must be preserved. In the first place, the sources of evidence must be sought; then the progress of opinions in the history of the church, as confirming just views, should be traced; next the special views and their advocacy which have introduced modern controversy must be examined; and lastly, the practical difficulties which have grown out of this controversy may be solved.

Sources of Evidence as to the Law of Communion.

All evangelical Christians agree in the general statement that the teaching of Christ and of his inspired apostles in the New Testament is the ultimate source of appeal in all questions of Christian doctrine and duty. It may be overlooked, however, in this general statement that two subsidiary principles are here involved which demand special consideration in seeking

the law of Christian communion. Christ taught by example as well as by precept; and, yet more, he has left each human mind dependent on its own powers in judging as to the meaning of his words, and as to the obligations imposed by his acts. There are therefore three sources of Christian knowledge by which we may determine the law of admission to the Lord's table; first, New Testament statements; second, apostolic practice; third, the history of Christian opinion.

It is natural and right that the Christian in deciding any duty should seek a "Thus saith the Lord." It may, however, be forgotten that God speaks as truly in his works as in his word, and that the *act* of Christ may be quite as authoritative as his *command.* In fact, special commands for the performance of acts, either bodily or mental, cannot always be rightly understood unless the acts which are enjoined have been beforehand witnessed or be so illustrated as to be comprehended.

Yet further, the historic fact, that an ordinance was practiced by the apostles and has continued from their day, is a convincing as well as legitimate proof of its divine authority. In regard to such ordinance, however, it should be remembered that no custom of any body claiming to be Christ's church is of any validity simply

because it can plead antiquity, while it has no ground in the teachings of divine wisdom.

The Testimony of the New Testament as to the Requisites for Admission to the Lord's Supper.

The ordinance of baptism was appointed by divine direction in the opening ministry of John, Christ's forerunner, as is seen in his expression, "He that sent me to baptize," etc. The ordinance of the Supper was instituted four years later, subsequent to Christ's ministry of three and one-half years, which was preceded six months by John's baptism. The ordinance of baptism is then antecedent in *time* to the Supper. At the institution of the Supper only the twelve apostles and no other believers were present. The reason of this was not, however, as Romanists aver, that its full observance by partaking of the cup is restricted to clergymen; since ever after all church members, as at Jerusalem and Corinth, partook of the Supper in common. That the apostles had been baptized before partaking of the Supper is confirmed by a chain of evidence the most positive conceivable. John baptized all who received his teaching and on profession of repentance and of faith in the Christ to come. Some, at least, of

the twelve were John's disciples. Again, after John left Bethabara for Enon, Christ's disciples baptized more disciples than had John, and it is inconceivable that they had neglected a duty which they required of others. The question as to the relation of John's baptism to that of Christ's disciples both before and after the institution of the Supper will be considered in noticing Robert Hall's inconclusive argument. It is important here to note that only a mind predisposed to avoid the laws by which truth is reached could suggest that Christ's disciples partook of the Supper before receiving baptism.

In his commission which was to guide his ministers Christ intimates an order of observance which in every trying era has been referred to by Christian leaders seeking to arrest corrupting error. Thus Jerome in the fourth century, Alcuinus in the eighth, and Calvin and Luther in the sixteenth centuries, as Archbishop Whately in the nineteenth century, urged the fact that Christ bound his ministers, *first* to make disciples, *second* to baptize them, *third* to teach them all other duties commanded, including that of the Supper. Throughout the entire history of the apostles, believers were baptized immediately on profession of their faith in Christ, which pre-

cludes of course the idea that the Lord's Supper could have been first observed.

And here human reason, which instinctively seeks a natural connection in God's appointments, remarks that baptism, once only observed and the sign of the beginning of spiritual life in Christ, must of course precede the Lord's Supper, which is repeatedly observed as the symbol of growth in grace and of continued dependence.

Observance of the Lord's Supper in Early Christian Ages.

The testimonies which establish the custom of the early churches as to baptism and the Lord's Supper in the ages succeeding the apostles are to be gathered from such writers as Irenæus and Origen in the second century, Tertullian in the third century, Cyprian and Jerome in the fourth, Augustine and others in the fifth century. They are in part brought together by such historians as Gieseler and such archæologists as Coleman; and they can be substantiated by any student of early Christian literature. They all accord in the following testimony: The earnest aim of faithful Christian teachers in the early ages was first to lead men to genuine repentance and faith in Christ, and

to this end the gospel was preached to all, while persevering catechetical instruction was given to children and youth. Baptism was administered (except in cases of threatening death) only to those who professed faith in Christ. Even in the times of the apostles, however, the influence of early Jewish and heathen, Asiatic and Grecian religious convictions, led to a very common impression that the external ordinances, appointed by Christ only as symbols of spiritual change, had in themselves the efficacy ascribed to the rites taught to them from childhood—an impression against which Christian missionaries in all ages have been obliged to guard. This error the apostles Paul and Peter sought in their Epistles to correct, as Christian teachers in all ages have observed. This popular impression has always, however, betrayed both weak and worldly Christian ministers into a yielding to the eager appeal of half-enlightened minds that Christ's ordinances be administered to persons not intelligent believers. Hence baptism came to be administered to those in peril of death, to infants, to the insane and idiotic, and even to dead bodies; and since, in the case of the sick, baptism could not be administered by immersion, aspersion, or the sprinkling of the entire body, was resorted to.

Universally the Lord's Supper, and that in both elements, was administered to all baptized believers, and to none others unless to those whose baptism was also exceptional. How very carefully invitations to the Lord's Supper were guarded, is indicated in the so-called "Apostolic Constitutions," and in allusions recorded in the works of many early Christian writers. Moreover, in marked consistency, the elements of the Supper in both kinds were administered to the baptized sick, to the insane, and to infants, under the common impression that it possessed a saving efficacy, the Lord's Supper always succeeding to baptism.

About the fifth century the Western or Roman Church distinguished between baptism once administered and the Lord's Supper repeatedly given, so far as catechumens were concerned. From that time catechetical instruction, which in the early ages was made to precede both baptism and the Lord's Supper in the case of children and youth, was carefully introduced prior to their first communion. This order of the ordinances has virtually been regarded in all Protestant churches, the infants baptized not being admitted to the Lord's Supper until mature in years and educated in the tenets of their ancestral faith. The Eastern Church, on the

contrary, including the Greek and its associate Asiatic and African branches, and also the Russian Church, make the second ordinance immediately to follow the first. The infant brought to the church is first plunged three times beneath the water in the font; it is then taken out, dressed, and brought back to the church, when a bit of wafer saturated with wine is placed by a spoon in the infant's mouth. Not an instance in history appears wherein the order of the two ordinances has not been preserved. It is only among the modern Baptists of England, guided by such leaders as Robert Hall, that the natural, the scriptural, and the historical order of baptism and the Supper has been set aside.

Teaching and Practice of the Protestant and Reformed Churches as to Admission to the Lord's Supper.

The names Protestant and Reformed have been given to those who in modern times have separated from the Roman Church, protesting against its errors and seeking to reform them. Among all these churches infant baptism has been retained, but infant communion has been discarded. Baptists, neither protesting nor reforming, have simply maintained adherence to New Testament precedents. The statements of

leading authorities as to the views and practice of Protestant churches so generally represented in the American States is an instructive confirmation of the history just considered. Calvin and his more comprehensive theological successor, Turretine, while sustaining at length infant baptism against the Anabaptists, repeat the testimony of the Fathers that catechetical instruction, although it do not precede baptism, must be given before admission to the communion. The German Reformers, while differing as to the expediency of retaining infant baptism, made admission to the Supper the privilege of only mature and professed believers who had received baptism. Dwight, the leader in New England theology, states as "indispensable qualifications" for admission to the Lord's Supper, that the candidate "should be a person of piety, that he should have made a public confession of religion, and that he should have been baptized." In this statement Dr. Woods of Andover accords, referring to it as the teaching of all the Reformers.

The views and practice of several leading denominations in America as to admission to the Lord's table have been recently brought together by Dr. A. Alex. Hodge in his "Outlines of Theology;" among which the following are note-

worthy. The Assembly's rules prescribe: "Children born within the pale of the visible church, and dedicated to God in baptism, when they come to years of discretion, if they be free from scandal, appear sober and steady, and to have sufficient knowledge to discern the Lord's body, they ought to be informed it is their duty and privilege to come to the Lord's Supper." Again, Dr. Hodge states: "The Baptist churches, denying altogether the right of infant church membership, receive all applicants for the communion as from the world, and therefore demand *positive* evidences of the new birth of all. All the Pædobaptist churches, maintaining that all children baptized in infancy are already members of the church, distinguish between the admission of the children of the church to the communion and the admission *de novo* to the church of the unbaptized alien from the world."

It is apparent from this statement of Dr. Hodge that any Pædobaptist church may come to have a majority of unrenewed members, and that even its officers may be men unacquainted with saving regeneration. That this is not only a possible but a natural result is verified in the history of the churches founded by the great Reformers in Switzerland, Germany, England, Scotland, and in New England. It is equally

worthy of note that the candor of Dr. Hodge leads him to place the Baptists in their true position. Nothing is said of any difference between Baptist and Pædobaptist churches in prescribing both baptism and church membership as prerequisites for admission to the Lord's Supper; for as to this order of requirements there is no difference. The Baptists, on the other hand, as Dr. Hodge tacitly admits, stand as guardians of the Lord's table from communicants who do not give "*positive* evidences of the new birth."

Baptist View of Admission to the Lord's Supper.

The Baptists, so far as infant baptism is concerned, are virtually successors to the so-called Anabaptists, who along the Alps—both in Italy and in Switzerland—and in Germany, maintained that the only Christian baptism is an immersion administered on profession of personal faith in Christ, and who were called by their opponents Anabaptists, or rebaptizers, as though they baptized again persons admitted to their churches. They only baptized those who had not received a real Christian baptism before.

Baptists, in their mode of baptism, are as truly successors to the Eastern Church, occupying half Europe, Northern and Western Asia, and

Northern and Central Africa, who retain immersion as the form of baptism prescribed in the Greek word employed by the inspired writers and preserved in Greek liturgies. Baptists, in fact, so far as the first ordinance of Christ's church is concerned, are the faithful representatives, as all able ecclesiastical historians admit, of the primitive church in its early ages.

Baptist views of the Lord's Supper, when clearly stated, as also their practice, are equally true to the early and also to the later history of the Christian church. Believing, with all other Christian denominations, that the two ordinances appointed by Christ must be observed in the order stated by him in his commission, Baptists hold in harmony with each other these two principles: *first*, the express teaching of the New Testament is the ultimate authority both as to the design and order of baptism and the Supper; but *second*, the interpretation of the New Testament records is left by God's appointment to the conscience and judgment of each Christian believer. Applying these two principles to the question of admission to the Lord's Supper, two distinct duties manifestly arise: *first*, to *invite* any others than baptized believers—members of churches of baptized believers—would be a violation of the law of Christ held by Christians in

all ages; and *second*, to forbid any company of persons who are satisfied with their own baptism and fitness for church fellowship from uniting in churches and carrying out their own conscientious convictions in regard to the Lord's Supper, would be equally a violation of Christ's law of individual responsibility. To the legitimacy of these conclusions no consistent mind can fail to give its assent. As to its united justice and charity, no pious heart can take exception.

The Principle of Unrestricted Communion Advocated by Robert Hall and others in Modern Times.

Robert Hall in the preface to his "Terms of Communion" reveals the secret that it was *misguided sensibility*, rather than conscientious views of truth, which prompted him to a practice opposed to all Christian precedent. He says: "There is no position in the whole compass of theology of the truth of which he [the writer] feels a stronger persuasion than that no man or set of men are entitled to prescribe as an indispensable condition of communion what the New Testament has not enjoined as a condition of salvation." Passing by the apparent unhinging of mind which betrayed this model of classic English into the use of "or" for *nor*

and of "are" for *is*, the failure in logical discrimination is worthy of careful consideration, since it is the clue to the same failure throughout his treatise. It is the error betrayed by Dr. Hodge when he urged before the Evangelical Alliance that "no church has a right to demand more for Christian union and communion than Christ demands to enter heaven." Mr. Hall excludes one ordinance of Christ, baptism, as not a "condition of salvation," yet tacitly assumes that another ordinance, the communion, is, if not a condition, yet virtually an essential, to salvation. So Dr. Hodge, alike unconsciously, assumes a third external duty, church union, as essential, while baptism is unessential. If we examine the Scriptures, we find that baptism, communion, and church union are all duties manifestly required by Christ. The question at issue, however, is not how far either of these is essential to salvation, but whether there is a natural and necessary order for their observance prescribed by Christ.

While Mr. Hall thus shows that lack of careful thought so essential in the search for truth, his misguided sensibility finds frank utterance in these added statements: "The writer is persuaded that a departure from this principle in the denomination to which he belongs has been

extremely injurious, not only to the credit and prosperity of that particular body, but to the general interests of truth. . . . By keeping themselves in a state of separation and seclusion from other Christians they have not only evinced an inattention to some of the most important injunctions of Scripture, but have raised up an invincible barrier to the propagation of their sentiments beyond the precincts of their own party." How manifest that in Mr. Hall's mind the wish has become father to the thought—that, led by the generous desire not to seem to cultivated minds a bigot, and to be truly charitable toward Christian brethren not holding his views of baptism, he has been betrayed into the admission of a principle which they could not accept, even though it permitted union in communion! for no Pædobaptist church can accept the view that baptism is not a prerequisite to the Lord's Supper, nor could it join Mr. Hall in the invitation of unbaptized communicants.

The following remark indicates yet further the inconsistency of Hall's views. He says: "The true idea of Christian communion indicated in the expression the 'communion of saints' is by no means confined to a joint participation of the Lord's Supper. When it is

used in connection with that rite (1 Cor. x. 16), it is employed, not to denote the fellowship of Christians, but the spiritual participation of the body and blood of Christ." Had Mr. Hall, like the Rev. Mr. Marston in his address to the Evangelical Alliance, analyzed all the New Testament allusions to the "fellowship," or "communion," of saints, he would have remarked that this doctrine, so far from being "confined to," has never any direct reference to "joint participation of, the Lord's Supper." In manifest inconsistency, however, both with this statement and the "latitudinarian" view he professes to controvert, Mr. Hall urges: "We should meet at the Lord's table with those with whom we feel ourselves at liberty to join in every other branch of religious worship;" yet he blames Mr. Robinson as "latitudinarian" in admitting "all professed Christians" to the Lord's Supper, since "the general practice of the Christian world makes baptism an indispensable requisite to the Lord's table." This endless failure to harmonize in principle, not only with Baptists, but with all his Christian brethren, which Mr. Hall experienced, was not by any means peculiar to him; we shall see it to be the lot of all modern advocates of unrestricted communion.

After this preface, Mr. Hall, in the body of his treatise, gives his principal effort to the argument that John's baptism was not Christian baptism. He thus seeks to show that Christ's apostles were not in the Christian sense baptized when they received the Supper, and that therefore Christian baptism is not to be regarded an indispensable requisite to the Lord's Supper. It is worthy of special notice that Mr. Hall does not attempt to show that any one converted after Christ's resurrection was received to the Supper prior to baptism. This of itself indicates that his argument, even if sustained, does not support his conclusion. His argument is substantially the following:

Christ's commission prescribing the form of baptism was given after his resurrection. To this plea it is a sufficient reply that the commission consists of three parts, the first and third of which had the same import before as after Christ's resurrection, whence the presumption is that the import of the intervening command is unchanged. Again, Hall argues that the formula of baptism, "In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," was not given until after the institution of the Supper. The statement is but an opinion at best of Mr. Hall, and, still more, a supposition

at variance both with John's teaching and with Christ's connected commands. If the command to "make disciples" and to "teach all things" *before* taught them were but repetitions of previous injunctions, who is able to say that the formula of baptism was not one previously prescribed? That this was virtually the formula of baptism used by John is manifest from the fact that all whom he baptized were required both to confess their sins and to believe on him to come, who should baptize them with the Holy Ghost. Again, Mr. Hall urges that John's baptism was that of "repentance" rather than of faith. Two vital objections exist to this view. It is in violation of the universal teaching of the Old and the New Testaments that all men redeemed before Christ came, believed in the Saviour to come and were renewed by the Holy Spirit. Yet more, what mind can conceive of a repentance that is genuine unassociated with faith in the divine Redeemer? If Mr. Hall's argument proves anything, it proves too much for his purpose, since it shows that not only were Christ's apostles destitute of Christian baptism, but also of spiritual renewal and of saving redemption, when they received the Supper. Still again, Hall urges that baptism after Christ's commission was "superior" to that of John In this

view he supposes Chrysostom to agree, his own prototype of rhetorical rather than logical statement. Chrysostom's remark, however, is to this effect—that the spiritual influence attending baptism as well as preaching after Christ's death was greater than before. This view of Chrysostom is both scriptural and logical. Before Christ's death Christ's expiatory sacrifice could not be fully appreciated nor the Holy Spirit's application of it be completely realized; and of course baptism, which embodied the idea of Christ's death and resurrection as a cause, and of the believer's death to sin and resurrection to spiritual life as the effect, could not be so vivid a symbol before as after Christ's commission.

Mr. Hall thinks that his theoretic views, just considered, are sustained by apostolic example in the case of rebaptism at Ephesus. He overlooks, while dwelling on the isolated expression, "John's baptism," the plain intimation found in the connection of the narrative. Apollos, preaching at Ephesus, had misunderstood what John taught—that baptism was the sign of new life received from Christ, who should baptize with the Holy Spirit. This ignorance was instructed by Aquilla and Priscilla; and thereupon Apollos left Ephesus and sailed for Corinth. Paul, com-

ing thereupon to Ephesus, assures those baptized under the influence of these imperfect teachings that John's baptism implied belief in Christ and reception of the Holy Ghost; whereupon they were baptized "in the name" not only of the Holy Spirit, but also "of the Lord Jesus." If Hall's view were correct, then we should have expected the record that Christ's chosen twelve, also the one hundred and twenty at Jerusalem, and again the five hundred in Galilee, were re-baptized.

Whether Hall's view be correct or not, the incident proves that the apostle Paul did not regard baptism valid or a title to admission to the church and to its ordinances, unless it had been received in every respect according to Christ's appointment. Had he studied the *history* of the interpretation he so heedlessly advocates, down to the time when it was made an article of faith by the Council of Trent, he would have shrunk from alliance with a principle maintained by the advocates of ritual and hierarchial salvation as opposed to the spiritual truth maintained by the Reformers. The Romanists, in order to weaken popular confidence in the Reformers, had contended that baptism by administrators not in the line of apostolic succession was invalid. The Reformers maintained that Christian bap-

tism was ordained under John's ministry, that Christ received it, and that otherwise the gospel dispensation has not Christ but the apostles as its head. Their most scholarly exponent, Turretine, argues, therefore, from Acts xix. 1–5, that John's baptism supposed in those who received it the same faith implied in the formula of baptism given by Christ to the apostles. Going further than the text justified, in order to meet the Anabaptists—who regarded infant baptism invalid, and therefore rebaptized adult believers and justified it by Paul's act—Turretine contended that ver. 5 is Luke's statement of John's act rather than of Paul's. This interpretation Hall could not of course receive, since it made Luke directly to assert that John baptized "in the name of the Lord Jesus." Modern scholarship, as represented alike by Conybeare and Hackett, agrees in the interpretation which makes ver. 5 Luke's statement as to Paul's rebaptism of the twelve disciples; while it also agrees that ver. 4 implies that John's baptism was Christian baptism.

Inconsistency of Hall's View with Spiritual Christianity.

The history above traced indicates that evangelical sentiment in all ages has recognized

both regeneration and baptism as prerequisite to admission to the Lord's Supper. Hall's view, that the neglect of baptism is no bar to communion, makes also the absence of regeneration no exception in the invitation to the Supper. Dr. Hodge perceives and avows that the Baptists make this special discrimination, Baptists requiring, as the Assembly's rule does not, positive evidence of spiritual renewal as prerequisite to communion. Mr. Hall's proposed invitation includes all members of the churches of England, Scotland, and Germany, and of churches in America modeled after their precedents. The theory of Hall, therefore, in principle as well as in fact, avows that *both* the requisites for admission to the Lord's Supper, universally recognized in Christian history, may be set aside. The Greek Church justifies infant communion only on the ground that regeneration is affected in baptism; the Episcopal and other churches which have grown out of state establishments seek positive evidence of regeneration before communion only so far as they deny baptismal regeneration; and the so-called open-communion Baptist stands entirely alone in the history of the church as a virtual advocate for admission to the Lord's Supper of persons neither regenerated nor baptized.

Injustice to other Christian Denominations in the Application of Hall's Principle.

In the open-communion Baptist churches of England, such as Spurgeon's, motives of curiosity and supposed liberality lead many to leave their own churches and flock to the communion service at the Tabernacle. It is not strange that the pastors of surrounding churches should feel aggrieved. The ministerial discourtesy is palpable, as would be apparent were the surrounding churches of the same faith and order. The injustice to the members of the churches thus depleted at their communion service is equally apparent, as would appear were Mr. Spurgeon's church the one whose members were enticed from their duty. The injury to individual Christians who accept such invitations is soon revealed; for of all demoralizing practices, neglect of church communion is one of the most corrupting.

Incongruity in Church Membership growing out of Hall's View.

Incongruity in organization is one of the best tests of inconsistency in principle, since its outward manifestation strikes even the superficial

observer. Some open-communion Baptists, as Spurgeon, contend that baptism by immersion, and on profession of faith, is prerequisite to church membership, though not to communion. Others, as Dr. Landells, regard this as inconsistent, and receive members of Pædobaptist churches to private membership, but deny to them official position, since the church officer must be an "example in all things." Yet a third class, as Dr. Brock, deeming the last-mentioned view also inconsistent, admit avowed adherents of Pædobaptist churches to the position of office-bearers in their churches. In addition to the injustice thus shown to those admitted only to partial membership, every mind must recognize the incongruity in the organization of churches thus composed. That incongruity is threefold: first, in the relation of the members to each other; second, in the fellowship of sister churches with each other; and third, in the co-operation of other denominations with such churches.

Perversion of the End sought in Invitations to the Lord's Supper induced by Hall's Principle.

It is illustrative of the necessary partial views to which every human mind is subject that we may consider for hours what principle

should govern invitations to the Lord's Supper, and never once ask ourselves, "Why give any invitation at all?" The members of each church, who alone ordinarily are present at a communion service, need no invitation. It is a rare exception that a church member absent from home is present with another church on communion occasions. Invitations to baptism are carefully guarded; in general, they are only appropriate in the place of one's residence. The Lord's Supper is equally sacred, and as carefully to be guarded.

The utter perversion of the very idea of invitations to the Lord's Supper strikes a thoughtful American of any Christian denomination when he meets the safeguard thrown around the table by open-communion Baptists in England. He hears the apparently indiscriminate invitation given at the Tabernacle. On repairing to the chapel where the Supper is observed, what is his surprise to be asked for his "ticket"! He reflects, and concludes that no minister or church dare make the approach to the Lord's table indiscriminate and unguarded. The unrestricted invitation it is found necessary to restrict to persons known by the church officers as members of evangelical churches. The *admission* is thus limited to members of neighboring churches, who ought to be elsewhere, and the unknown Baptist

visitor far from his home is excluded. Surely that principle is wrong which leads to such results.

Mistaken Views of Christian Charity which prompt Inconsistent Invitations to the Lord's Supper.

Attended, as the departure from scriptural principles as to the Lord's Supper always is, with such inconsistency and injustice, the inquiry naturally arises, Why has it so misled men of generous sensibilities? We have but to recall the kindred departure from Christ's law as to baptism in order to appreciate this tendency of a liberal spirit. When men and women accustomed to regard external rites as saving implore the Christian minister to administer baptism to their loved ones, it is hard for a good man to be at once faithful and kind in meeting his duty. A similar struggle arises in the breast of a sincere Christian pastor when urged to depart from Christ's law in the administration of the Lord's Supper. Mistaken charity is the more likely to gain control in his mind because his fidelity cannot be fully appreciated, while his charity will be lauded. Such charity is a mistaken one, since true love to the souls for whom Christ died requires that he do nothing to encourage a false reliance for salvation.

Inconsistency as to the Lord's Supper leads to Inconsistency as to Baptism.

The relation between unrestricted communion and unrestricted baptism is not a mere supposed connection. True principles may be reached before experiment by observing the evidences which attest them; but false principles are both detected and confirmed by the course to which their adherents find themselves compelled. It requires but a few months' experience to make the practical advocate of unrestricted communion, first an apologist for those who receive and administer unscriptural baptism, and then a sharer with them. The mind that wanders at all from the straight path is insensibly led to a departure very different from that at first proposed.

Inconsistency as to Ordinances leads to General Departure from Christian Consistency.

It is instructive to observe that a false reliance on external ordinances, and a consequent neglect of their law, leads to a general undervaluing of spiritual truth taught in the gospel. This was observed by Paul among the Galatians, and was forcibly expressed in this figure: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." The

experience of churches other than Baptist as to inter-church communion is specially instructive. A series of occurrences since the conference of the Evangelical Alliance indicates how widely extended is the conviction that indiscriminate inter-communion has an influence most disorganizing on established churches. Immediately after that conference some leaders in the Episcopal Church, who despaired of securing any modification of its liturgy as to "baptismal regeneration," determined to organize the Reformed Episcopal Church. Inasmuch as participation with Presbyterians in the communion service was held to be infidelity to their church obligation, the expectation was sanguine that many among the advocates of inter-church communion would be co-operators in the new organization. To this end Presbyterian clergymen were invited to officiate in the pulpits of the new church. Thoughtful leaders soon saw the practical working of the inconsistent theory as to the communion. It was but the prelude to the breaking up of churches holding like faith, and the forming of an indefinite number of new organizations holding a different creed.

A few months passed. The voice of those who condemned the dean of Canterbury and his *evangelical* advocates for inter-church com-

munion as disorganizers was still echoing through England and America when another note of remonstrance was heard. It was that of high-churchmen condemning the *unevangelical* Dean Stanley. "We have had enough," said these conservative churchmen, "of these broad church utterances; their results are only demoralization and disorganization." And so the very leaders in the advocacy of inter-church communion are now guarding their flocks from its wooing call. It is the old experience of "counsels for other families not to be adopted in one's own household." This vital fact leads us back to another principle established in the gospel.

Baptism and Communion designed by Christ to be Church Ordinances.

The same divine wisdom which ordained the spiritual religion of Christ appointed as his agent for its perpetuation the Christian church. Vain is it for any man or body of men to argue that they can be Christians and do Christ's work without church organization. As Amos Kendall, when, after years of delay, at the age of seventy-five, he united with the Christian church, declared: "To refuse to unite with the Christian church is a *standing protest against Jesus Christ's plans.*" When it is stated that a

church is "a voluntary association" and an "independent body," it may be forgotten that no man is *voluntary* and no church *independent* as to Christ and his command. He requires every follower to unite with his church and co-operate with others in maintaining his ordinances and in doing his work. Those ordinances are baptism and the Supper.

The number required to constitute a church is not fixed. There must, however, be enough to maintain his ministry. He has separated his people into churches as society is separated into families, the primitive "church in the house" illustrating this principle. Each church is to have its administrators and ordinances, and all its members are to make the family table their constant gathering-place. The common conscience as to this truth is read in the scrupulous fidelity to church obligations enjoined and observed when two churches of the same denomination are found in the same neighborhood. The inviting of members of sister churches to inter-communion is nothing else than a violation of family propriety. Traced to its origin, this instinctive and ruling conviction is but the utterance of Christ's law written on the heart.

The question often arises whether the authority to administer Christian ordinances vests in a

church or in its minister. It is simply the question whether the ruler or the people constitutes the state, since a Christian minister, like a civil ruler, is nothing but the appointed organ of the body for which he acts. Men may be called to assume either civil or religious authority when acting alone which they could not assume with and for others. When Philip baptized the eunuch, Roger Williams his deacon, and Dr. Sears Mr. Oncken, the circumstances justified their individual act. Ordinarily, however, a Christian pastor, like a civil ruler, acts only as the organ of others. Any other view leads necessarily to the Romanist view that the priesthood, not the people, constitute the church, which alone has authority from Christ to observe his ordinances. The Lord's Supper administered in a sick-room is not only a departure from the law of its appointment as a church ordinance, but, like clinic or sick-bed baptism, it encourages in the receiver a false trust. Nothing but the subtle fallacy which has led to departure from Christ's law of admission to the Lord's Supper could have given countenance to so vital an error.

Relation of Sister Churches to each other as regards the Lord's Supper.

Led on by the logic of his thought, Dr. Hodge,

when arguing that "only faith in Christ" is prerequisite to communion, was led to declare, "A man who was a member of the church at Jerusalem was also a member of the church at Antioch and at Rome." The inquiry, then, is natural, why were "letters of commendation" from church to church given in the apostles' day, and why in every age of the church down to our times has the same custom prevailed? Certainly Dr. Hodge's suggestion was an essential part of his theory, and certainly that theory must be questionable which fails to notice so wide a field of facts.

It is manifest that each church in the relationship of its own members is a distinct family; this special relationship is a virtual separation from membership in another family. It is equally manifest that as families form communities, and have relations and duties outside of the family, so is it with churches. In Paul's day the churches of Judea, of Galatia, of Macedonia, and of Achaia were associated in neighborhoods, and these neighborhoods again combined in one Christian body. In that association churches were "independent," inasmuch as they were controlled by the mind and will of Christ directly, and only indirectly by their associates. This relation of churches to each

other is not, however, designed to supersede the sphere of the church, whose union provides for prayer, preaching, and the observance of the ordinances. Union meetings for prayer, praise, and mutual instruction may be occasionally profitable, but soon they are found to interfere with rather than promote church services. The *ordinances*, however, are only designed for individual churches; they are to be observed only at fixed times; they are to be administered by officers specially ordained; and, as Christ's example shows, are distinct from other services in which any person may engage and which any Christian may conduct. Inter-communion is appropriate, according to scriptural and historical precedent, not for churches as such, but for individuals, and that in exceptional cases. Communion as well as baptism is appropriate only at one's home, though the repeated observance of the former as compared with the single observance of the latter makes an exceptional communion a more frequent occurrence than an exceptional baptism. Union communion is an impossibility; for though at first the disciples at Jerusalem were "all together in one place," yet when shortly "three thousand," then "five thousand," then "multitudes," were "added to the Lord," worship and ordinances began to

be observed "from house to house," so that a church became a family, churches united only for co-operation, counsel, and division of labor in fulfilling Christ's commission, "Go preach my gospel to every creature." The suggestion made to the Evangelical Alliance by good Dr. Muhlenberg, that a union communion by representatives of different churches would prove the unity of Christ's church, met few respondents, because it was not sustained by New Testament precedent or historic sanction or manifest utility.

Fidelity to Christ's Law of Union in Communion secures Fellowship among Church Members.

Human minds differ in thought and feeling, and are made incapable of the close intimacy belonging to family relationship. Families are united by special congenialities between the members. It is so with churches, for two or more of the same faith and order grow up side by side, their members pass each other on their way to their places of worship every week, yet they may never sit together at the Lord's table. It is well that so general attention has been lately called to the Greek word occurring so often in the Epistles of Paul and of John, usually translated "fellowship," though in the Epistle to

the Corinthians rendered "communion." There is a *common nature* in the members of a family, which is not to be expected in society at large. Spiritual renewal plants the *germ* of a common nature in all renewed minds, but on earth "differences" in "the members" of the body and gradual growth in each member forbid immediate and complete congeniality, whose final perfection alone justifies the designation "fellowship." Fidelity to Christ's law preserves the *integrity* of this "fellowship," which Christ designed to be the cement in each of his churches. Indiscriminate inter-communion, like the Communist theory, may prove a *counterfeit*, an unreal fellowship. The application of Christ's maxim, "By their fruits ye shall know them," certainly gives this intimation. Like socialist communities, these loose communions are soon found to harbor men of selfish nature who make the association but minister to their ends. Fidelity to Christ's law at the Lord's table is as essential as in other table companionships.

Fidelity to Christ's Law of Communion fosters Harmony between Different Churches.

Churches of the same faith and order must, like the apostolic churches, unite for Christian

usefulness. Not only was there a general combination of all the early churches; there were also groupings of churches associated by national and other secular affinities in the apostolic times —an example now in force. As the churches of Judea, of Galatia, of Macedonia, and of Achaia were distinct, and even in some respects rival, associations, so is it now with those bearing the names of German Lutheran, Dutch Reformed, Scotch Presbyterian, and New England Congregational. Churches also differ in their views of truth. All these differences are probably overruled for the securing of the greatest comprehensiveness in labors for the defence of Christ's truth and the extension of Christ's cause. The same apostle who wrote most as to the oneness of Christ's church recognized most fully the existence of varieties in the membership, and with this in view declared, "Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule." Unless churches are agreed in their views of doctrine and practice, how can they walk together?

In this association of different churches, however, the "fellowship," or "communion," which unites them is, as Robert Hall recognized, not interchange in the observance of ordinances. The end of association among churches is the

accomplishment of Christian labor distinct from the special duties of individual churches. The introduction of matters belonging only to a church mars the efficiency of such associations.

Fidelity to Christ's Law of Communion gives Baptists their True Mission.

The variety of views arising in great degree from the different constitution of human minds has given origin to the varied denominations of evangelical Christians, which are sometimes said to have different missions; hence we are often told of the special mission of leading denominations, such as the Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Methodist, as conservators of order in worship, studiousness in doctrine, and earnestness in labor. The Baptists certainly have a very important mission in preserving, by faithfulness to Christ's laws, the purity and spirituality of church ordinances. Their views and spirit, however, in fulfilling this mission are naturally very frequently misconstrued.

All Christians virtually agree in regarding both regeneration and baptism as prerequisite to the Lord's Supper. Good men differ as to regeneration, some supposing it to be effected in baptism, yet allowing that it is a spiritual change. Good men also differ as to baptism, many regard-

ing the change both as to mode and subject which gained such wide acceptance in mediæval times to be unessential. Candid and clear thinkers, like Dr. Hodge, allow that Baptists maintain scriptural views of both regeneration and of baptism. The only question is how Baptists should regard views of baptism and regeneration held by those who have departed from what they believe to be the law of Christ.

It should be distinctly observed that no consistent Baptist claims to be his brother's judge. Every conscientious believer in his own regeneration and baptism ought to go to the Lord's table. No one, however, can ask that another endorse a baptism which he does not regard as scriptural, for this would make one man the judge for another. Every thoughtful mind must see that there can be no other consistent rule of duty than that which harmonizes fidelity to individual conscience and Christian charity for all believers in Christ.

All must admit that communion, like baptism, is a church ordinance; that only necessary absence justifies communion out of one's church; that change of residence requires change of church membership; that the necessity for invitations to the Lord's Supper relates only to an occasional and temporary visiting communicant;

that no invitation can be consistently given except to those agreeing in their views of baptism, which all Christians recognize as pre-requisite to communion, and that no visitor can legitimately expect or accept an invitation but from those who regard his baptism as scriptural. The rarest conceivable case, then, of apparent exception to Christ's law of union in communion above considered is that of a church member absent from home and meeting with a church of another denomination than his own. The application of Christ's law to this rare case is the only one in question.

Since law has no exception, the gospel rule for such cases must be apparent on its mere statement. If the visitor is with a church in accord with him in its views of baptism, as is the case with the various denominations of Pædobaptists, he may either defer his privilege or enjoy it at his own option. If, on the other hand, the visitor is with a church that does not regard his baptism as scriptural, he is in the condition of one meeting fellow-Christians with whom he may enjoy religious worship, but not engage in church ordinances. How different the actual case of difficulty is from that often

supposed in discussions as to requisites for communion, every lover of Christ's truth and grace ought carefully to consider.

Fidelity to Christ's Law of Communion promotes Co-operation among all Evangelical Christians.

The end of the Evangelical Alliance is that secured in the primitive church when virtually Paul was president and Luke secretary of the universal alliance of all Christ's early followers. The mission of such an organization, designed to make the church one in Christian influence upon the world, has been, and still may be, mistaken.

Two kinds of unity exist, the one resulting from external force, the other from internal energy; the one that of the rock pressed into cohesion, the other that of the plant drawing the elements around into a living organism. Among men in political relations there is the unity of despotism compelling by bayonets, and the unity of a republic uniting by its utility. In the history of the church the former, though struggling for the mastery, has always failed. Even the Roman Church—republican in all its brotherhoods except that of the Jesuits, and in all its councils except that which declared the pope infallible head—is revolting from the despotic

idea. Christ taught to his disciples, "The kingdom of God is within you;" and to the Roman governor, asking as to his authority, he declared: "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." The only tie that can bind Christians in alliance is love for the truth and a yearning for the grace which in Christ were "full" and perfect.

The chief criticism passed by the secular press on the late meeting of the Evangelical Alliance was the only apparent but not real display of secular titles and worldly distinctions that sometimes appeared in its appointments. The main fear expressed by its thoughtful supporters was the apprehension that the temporary outflow of like views and kindred feeling might not result in permanent co-operation for the advancement of Christ's kingdom. The only circumstance that to any mind seemed to threaten the integrity of its organization was the unofficial invitation to a union communion, whose consequences have proved so instructive.

Fidelity to Christ's Law the Harbinger of Christian Unity.

As no two men can have a common body, though they may have a common spirit, so the church will be one when not unattainable bodily

union, but attainable spiritual communion, is sought. By common consent the assembled delegates of the Evangelical Alliance—representatives of evangelical churches of every name and nation—echoed in their intercourse with each other the manifest distinction between unity and uniformity; the one of which the divine Redeemer enjoined, the other of which the divine Creator has made impossible. Differences of views and practice seem to multiply rather than decrease the formal divisions now occurring in every denomination, as every thoughtful observer of the progress of evangelical Christianity in Germany, France, Great Britain, and the United States must be convinced. That there is a growing unity of views as to the essential doctrines of grace, and even as to the nature and efficacy of church ordinances, is so palpably manifest that no careful observer can doubt it. This unity Christ enjoined; this oneness was the burden of his last prayer; and what the "Lord of all" both enjoined and prayed for must "in his due time" be realized.

THE END.

RESTRICTION

OF THE

LORD'S SUPPER.

WHAT IT IS NOT, AND WHAT IT IS.

BY

REV. HENRY F. COLBY.

PHILADELPHIA:
AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,
1420 CHESTNUT STREET.

RESTRICTION of the LORD'S SUPPER.

The Question Defined.

IN the discussion of any subject it is of the first importance carefully to define the question in debate. The neglect of such preliminary definition has led to great confusion in the controversy concerning the proper persons to come to the Lord's Supper. Men have thought they were assailing the Baptists, and have exulted in the conclusiveness of their arguments, when really they have only knocked over men of straw which they themselves had set up. The real question we understand to be this: OUGHT WE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT EVANGELICAL PEDOBAPTISTS ARE QUALIFIED TO PARTAKE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER? We say *Evangelical* Pedobaptists, because those with whom we

have to do chiefly in this discussion do not ask us to receive any others. They believe that the Lord's Supper should be restricted to that extent. They only claim that the restriction should not leave out any who profess to agree with us in an experimental knowledge of the main doctrines of salvation. We put the question: Ought we to *acknowledge* that they are qualified to partake? rather than Ought we to *invite* them to partake? because there may be the acknowledgment without the formal invitation. Many Baptist churches give no invitation from the pulpit even to believers of the same faith and order, but it is from no unwillingness to acknowledge that such are entitled to observe the ordinance. So if it is the view of any church that Pedobaptists are entitled to come to the Lord's Table, it can be made known to them in other ways than by public invitations. If, for example, the pastor as the representative of the church should be known to preach that "every believer, by virtue of his faith alone, has an unquestioned, original, and inalienable right to a seat at the Table," it would have the effect, without the formality, of an invitation to all

Christians. The question before us is, Ought we to make such *acknowledgments?*

Not a Refusal of Christian Fellowship.

It is not a question whether we shall regard members of other denominations as *Christians.* Alas! such it has sometimes been represented to be by our opponents. Baptists have been stigmatized as deniers of the discipleship of all who do not belong to Baptist churches. As our principles become better understood, this denunciation is withdrawn. But the need is not altogether past, for our answering it as a misrepresentation of our position as regards the Lord's Supper. So far are we from denying that members of Pedobaptist churches are good Christians, that we love and honor them as brethren, servants of the same Master with ourselves. We do not say that they are not just as good Christians as we are. Nay, our position concerning the Lord's Supper does not declare that they may not be, on the whole, better Christians than we are—more humble, more devoted, more zealous. It does not interfere with the real recognition by us, of any of their virtues. It simply declares, so

far as it has a bearing toward them, that they have omitted that which we are solemnly convinced is one requirement of our Lord, and which they ought to fulfil before they sit down to the Lord's Table. Nor does it deny that they are conscientious in that omission; it simply claims for our own consciences the same deference which it accords to theirs. This has been explained again and again. And yet to-day the argument most frequently used by our opponents, and with which they may succeed here and there in troubling some within our ranks, is, that by the practice of inviting to the Lord's Supper only baptized believers, we are passing censorious judgment upon our Pedobaptist brethren, virtually refusing to treat them as Christians. The inference would be a just one, if at the same time we declared that all true believers had, by virtue of their faith alone, a right to the Lord's Table. But since it is known to be the view of our denomination, and a view which we hold in common with the majority of the Christian world, that the Lord's Supper belongs not merely to believers, but to *baptized* believers, the charge is altogether unfounded,

a misrepresentation and confusion of the real question in debate.

"Do we not hope to sit down with them to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb?" Yes. But the Marriage Supper of the Lamb is a different thing from an ordinance which Jesus has committed to his Church on earth to be observed only "till he come." Because we expect to see certain persons in heaven, and may even be impressed by their greater fitness than our own to enter that blest abode, is no reason why we should indorse that one part of their practice which we believe to be an error, and which we feel we would be indorsing if we welcomed them to the Lord's Table. The Baptist child of Pedobaptist parents, for example, need not be troubled by the charge that, by declining to commune with them, he is judging their piety. If he is judging their piety by declining to sit at the Lord's Table with them, he is judging it still more by declining to enter the same religious denomination with them. He may say that he does not unite with their church, simply because he dissents from their practice in regard to baptism. He wishes to exert his influence in

favor of the immersion of believers as the only true obedience to the Saviour's command. Well, then, it is upon that point, and that only, that he expresses dissent from them when he declines to meet them at the Lord's Supper. There may be, there is, Christian fellowship without church fellowship. As the former is not to be measured by membership in the same Christian denomination, neither is it to be measured by any such practice as joint participation in the Lord's Supper.

Not an Opposition to Christian Union.

Nor is it the question whether as Baptists we shall oppose true *Christian Union*, whether we shall hinder the fulfilment of Christ's prayer for his disciples, "that they all may be one." Some who are loudest in their advocacy of Christian union represent us as making such opposition, and speak almost as if our practice in restricting the Lord's Supper to baptized believers was the chief obstacle in the way of merging all denominations into a grand millennial unity. But our answer is,

God forbid that we should oppose so desirable an end!

We admit that united participation of the Lord's Supper among all Christians may be one result of the fulfilment of our Lord's petition. But the fact that it may be one result is no reason why we should use it as a means to that end. That unity will be a unity of faith, of agreement in the truth as it is in Jesus. Its outward and formal characteristics will be the expression of an inward and spiritual unanimity. It can be best promoted, therefore, by everything which will lead men to conform their principles and practice to the word of God. Only as they follow its directions will they come into sympathy with each other. It is because we are convinced of this, and are anxious for unity to be brought about on this true basis, that we are conscientiously bound not to recognize any practice which we believe to be a departure from Christ's commands. Our unwillingness, therefore, to invite to the Lord's Table Christians who have not been immersed, is so far from expressing a reluctance on our part to promote Christian union, that it emphasizes our

anxiety for the establishment of union upon the only real foundation. Our opponents ought to see that the fulfilment of Christ's prayer will be promoted, not by disobeying one's own conscientious convictions, but by asking humbly, What do the Scriptures indicate? and following those indications with consistency and firmness. Thus the true ground of union will be brought gradually to the view of all, and charity will become a "bond of perfectness," because it "rejoiceth in the truth." In the meanwhile, the mere formality of different denominations sitting down together at the Lord's Table can avail little. Even though the minds of those who unite in the ordinance were occupied with their relations to one another—which would be contrary to the main design of the ordinance as a remembrance of Christ—yet they would be in no greater doctrinal agreement than they were before. We fail to perceive that those denominations who are invited to sit with each other at the Lord's Table, Presbyterians and Methodists for example, are any less decided in their respective views, or any more disposed to work with each other for the exten-

sion of Christ's kingdom than the Baptists are to work with them both. Why, we ask, should that measure of agreement concerning the ordinances that enables Pedobaptists of different churches to unite in the observance of the Supper be taken as the test of Christian union any more than agreement upon other important doctrines—those, for example, on which Presbyterians and Baptists agree, while Presbyterians and Methodists differ? But if one of the ordinances is to be singled out as the special visible mark of that unity, why not follow Paul's example and put forward *baptism*, that ordinance which is more intimately connected with each individual's profession of faith? In the fourth chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians, where he describes that "unity of the Spirit" which he exhorts them to "keep in the bond of peace," he mentions six points which are inward and spiritual, and only one that is outward. But he does not say "one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith and—sitting together at the Lord's Table." He says, "one Lord, one faith, one *baptism*." This is not to be explained by referring it to "the baptism

of the Holy Spirit." The best commentators agree in saying that water baptism is meant, the outward seal of that faith which is mentioned just before it. Moreover, the "one Spirit," in whose blessings all believers share, has been spoken of earlier in the list, and would not now be introduced again. Paul, therefore, felt that baptism was the ordinance to which we should first look for an outward sign of Christian unity. If there was unity on that point, unity about the Lord's Table would naturally follow. We respectfully suggest the inquiry, therefore, whether those denominations which recognize two or three sorts of baptism—baptisms, so called, of different modes, and having different meanings for those who are the subjects of them—are not thereby putting greater obstacles in the way of true Christian unity than we who, by a faithful insistence upon the scriptural doctrine of "one baptism," are led to invite to the Lord's Table only those by whom that baptism has been received.

Not a Contempt of Pedobaptist Churches.

The charge has sometimes been brought

against us, that we thus "*unchurch*" our Pedobaptist brethren. If by "the church" is meant the whole spiritual body of Christ's disciples, the charge has already been answered. But if the church here referred to is the visible institution founded by Christ, the sensitiveness of those who make their complaint in this form may arise from wrong views of the church, as if church-membership was to be more highly prized and guarded than compliance with Christ's commands. It is because we treat them as *unbaptized* Christians that they charge us with "unchurching" them. Their sensitiveness and their answer, therefore, should have regard to what is true baptism, rather than to church-membership, which follows baptism. We regard the apostolic model of a church to be a company of believers in Christ, who have been baptized on a confession of their faith, and who are organized for the observance and maintenance of the Christian religion, their mutual growth in grace, and the diffusion of the truth. To this model, we feel ourselves under obligations to conform, and we invite our Pedobaptist brethren to be baptized, in order that they

may conform to it also. In the meanwhile, as we would not refuse the name of *house* to a building in which men lived, even though it seemed to us to be improperly put together, and to have a very loose and irregular arrangement for a door; so we do not deny the name of *church* to any organization into which true believers have conscientiously entered for that purpose. We simply declare, concerning Pedobaptist churches, that in our judgment they are *irregularly constituted*. And as for the Table which is spread by them: the bread is there, the wine is there, the prayers are offered, and the elements duly distributed to many devout persons, who partake of them in faith and find the occasion a precious means of grace. We think we express the sentiment of all except extremists in the Baptist ranks, when we say, we have no disposition to deny that it is the Lord's Supper. But since baptism scripturally precedes the Supper, our view is that they partake of it *prematurely*. If they are sincere in the belief that they have been baptized, that they are fully qualified to partake, they are at liberty of course to follow their own convictions in their own churches.

But when we decline to acknowledge that they are fully qualified, our conviction being that they are not, we merely claim, as was said before, the same rights for our consciences which we accord to theirs. The declaration that our practice casts *contempt* upon their churches and their Table is a misrepresentation of our attitude. On the contrary, we honor their churches for all which has been accomplished by them for the defence of evangelical truth and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom.

Not a Rude Exclusion.

The question of the proper qualifications for the Lord's Supper is not whether we shall thrust a Pedobaptist out of the room if one of them, knowing our principles, takes the liberty to sit down with us to the Table. Such rudeness would be altogether uncalled for. If any Baptist church was ever guilty of it, we protest against its being used as an illustration of our denominational spirit. All this talk about our "driving men away from the Lord's Table" is unjust caricature. We regard the duty of a Baptist church in this matter as

done, if it has caused the community to understand, that it refuses either to invite those whom it looks upon as unbaptized to the Lord's Supper, or to approve of such partaking of it with them. If, in spite of public statements and private expostulation, an unbaptized person should persist in partaking, we do not see that consistency would require a forcible prevention. If the person knows that he is looked upon as having no right there, the mere sufferance of his intrusion is not incompatible with the maintenance of our principle. The principle, like every other, should be upheld by moral means, not by the use of either violence or discourtesy.

Indeed, the question before us is not, strictly speaking, whether we shall *exclude* Pedobaptists from the Supper. Not only do we accord them full liberty to follow their own convictions in this regard in their own churches, but we are ready to admit them to the Table as spread by us *upon precisely the same conditions upon which we admit ourselves.* These conditions are not invented by us; we find them indicated in the New Testament. We do not, therefore, really exclude any from the Table;

we simply insist that all should come to it by that way which we believe implicit loyalty to Christ points out.

In our discussion thus far, we have pointed out what the question is *not*, and have tried to clear away some of the things which sentimentalism and prejudice have connected with it, and which have so often prevented a calm and thoughtful judgment. Let us now proceed to consider the real and simple question in debate: OUGHT WE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT PEDOBAPTISTS ARE QUALIFIED TO PARTAKE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER? If we ought to do so, every one will admit that it must be upon *one of three grounds*—either, *because baptism is not a prerequisite to the Lord's Supper;* or, *because the church, setting the Table, should leave entirely to the participant's own conscience the question, whether he has been really baptized;* or, *because we ought to recognize sprinkling or pouring as baptism.* Let us see if we can stand upon any one of these three grounds.

I. IS BAPTISM A PREREQUISITE?

If it is not, then, of course, we are free to throw open the Lord's Table to all believers. We go to the New Testament for light upon the subject, in this as in other points, taking the word of God as our only rule of faith and practice.

Now to establish this prerequisiteness, it is not necessary to find an explicit and formal command of Christ to that effect. The devoted disciple does not always wait for explicit and formal commands before he is satisfied as to his duty. He feels that an indication of his Lord's will derived by fair inference from general principles and particular examples and allusions should be enough to determine his conduct. Many matters of importance in the Christian life are determined in this way; for example, the observance of the first day of the week as the Lord's Day. Indeed, our restriction of baptism to those who have given credible evidence of faith, is not based upon any express statement, such as, "*Believers only shall be baptized.*" We believe that the prerequisiteness of faith to baptism is taught in

the New Testament, because it is a natural inference from clearly declared principles, and is implied in the order of the words in certain passages. No denomination feels it necessary to find in the Bible a *formulated* statement of its views, in order to establish their truth. It will be enough, then, for our purpose, to show that the invariable precedence of baptism to the Lord's Supper is implied in the word of God.

Baptism Associated with Discipleship.

We appeal, first, to those passages in which baptism is intimately associated with discipleship. The Great Commission reads: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations (or make disciples of all nations), baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The last injunction here is a comprehensive one. It seems to include baptism, the Lord's Supper, and all other Christian duties besides these two ordinances. But we see that Christ singled out one of the two ordinances, and made it the subject of a special injunction, before he gave this comprehensive injunction.

He evidently meant to connect it with discipleship, as the ritual act by which he expected that discipleship to be publicly and formally avowed; and, therefore, as preceding all privileges which presuppose such a formal avowal. He intended it, we believe, to be introductory to membership in the visible church, a putting on of Christ (see Gal. iii. 27) preparatory to being numbered with Christ's professed people, as the soldier puts on the uniform, and takes his place in the ranks. The solemnity of his words in this Great Commission; the occasion on which they were uttered; and their character as the comprehensive command to his disciples for all time, make a strict following of them incumbent upon us. If they indicate that discipleship precedes baptism, they also ascribe to baptism a special prominence and priority, on which we ought to insist.

In Mark xvi. 16, we read: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Here, baptism is so intimately connected with believing, that some quote the passage to prove that there can be no discipleship without baptism. Without indorsing any such extreme view of

it, we think it is evident, that Christ here emphasizes baptism as the initial ritual act, that by which the individual's faith in him is to be declared in due form, and the omission or depreciation of which as the initial rite is displeasing to him. The same remark applies to the language of Peter on the day of Pentecost: "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized" (Acts ii. 38, 41). When the Samaritans "believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts viii. 12). When the Philippian jailer was told to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, he evidently did so, and "was baptized, he and all his straightway." He then "rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house" (Acts xvi. 31–34). The same prompt obedience was manifested in the case of Paul (Acts ix. 18, and xxii. 16), of the eunuch (Acts viii. 38), of Cornelius (Acts x. 47), of Lydia (Acts xvi. 15), of Crispus and the Corinthians with him (Acts xviii. 8). In no

passage is the Lord's Supper associated with conversion in this way. We cannot, therefore, treat the order of the ordinances as a matter of no importance. To tell the convert, that he has a right to the Lord's Table before he has been baptized, would be to put another ordinance in between believing and baptism, and thus separate what God seems to have joined so closely together.

Our opponents object that this argument proves too much. They say, that if it makes baptism a prerequisite to the Lord's Supper, it makes it at the same time prerequisite to prayer, the exercise of Christian graces, and other things enjoined by Christ upon his disciples, especially the preaching of the word; so that we are inconsistent in inviting occasionally into our pulpits those whom we do not invite to sit with us at the Lord's Table. To this we reply: First, that prayerfulness and Christian conduct and a witnessing for Christ may belong to the evidences of discipleship; and, therefore, should in some measure precede as well as follow baptism. Second, that baptism and the Lord's Supper, together making up the New Testament ritual, occupy a

unique position among Christian duties. As between these two, the passages quoted evidently discriminate in favor of baptism as first, emphasizing it as the means of a public profession. Third, that our argument is simply, that baptism, being the formal profession, should precede the *formal* duties and privileges of the Christian life. We mean not only participation in the Lord's Supper, but also receiving the hand of church fellowship; voting as a church member; and, in cases where it seems fitting, ordination, in which by the laying on of hands the individual is set apart as suitable to be an instructor in the whole round of Christian doctrine, and to preside as pastor of a church. We would not ordain an unbaptized person, nor make a Pedobaptist the pastor of one of our churches. In all these things there is a formal element, which does not enter into the simple preaching of a sermon; and by a formal element we mean something, in a good sense, ceremonial or official, having relation to a church as an organized body of professed believers. While we regard baptism as prerequisite to such things, most of us see no impropriety in our occasionally

asking a Christian, whom we consider unbaptized, to address us on any religious theme consistent with our doctrinal views. We need merely to ask, "Is there reason to believe that he will preach to us on this occasion the truth?" But in welcoming one to the formal privileges of the Christian life, such as church membership, or the Lord's Table, we must ask, "Has there been the formal preparation required in God's word?" That baptism is thus to precede, is shown by the fact that in all these passages it is associated with the beginning of discipleship, as the Lord's Supper never is.

The Practice of Apostolic Churches

Also indicates that only baptized Christians should be invited to the Lord's Table. When the ordinance was instituted, only the eleven were present. That these had all been baptized is implied in the fact that Christ commanded them to baptize others, and had already used them for that purpose (John iv. 2). It is not probable that he commanded them to administer to others an ordinance to which they had not submitted themselves. In

Acts ii. 41, 42, we read, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Whether we understand the last words of verse 42 to refer to the Lord's Supper or not, it is evident that the verse as a whole includes the Lord's Supper, and that it describes a course of action that had been preceded by baptism. The only precepts or remarks relating to the Lord's Supper in the Epistles are found in the first epistle to the church at Corinth, (chapters x. and xi.) But in this epistle, as well as in those to the Romans, Galatians, and Colossians, Paul takes it for granted that his readers have been baptized. 1 Cor. i. 13. (Compare Rom. vi. 3. Gal. iii. 27. Col. ii. 12.)

That this order of the ordinances was invariably observed in apostolic times is, indeed, generally admitted. But it is claimed by some, that this furnishes no rule for our action, that it simply proves baptism before the Lord's Supper to be a natural and appropriate order,

but not one to be binding upon us, and to be universally required. Says the "open communion" Baptist: "In apostolic times all converts were immersed on profession of their faith. No others ever partook of the Lord's Supper, because no others ever asked for it. But now circumstances are different. Other Christians besides those who have been immersed desire to come to the Lord's Table. Therefore, if the apostles were living now, we should see them administering the ordinance to these, as well as to those whom we regard as baptized." The objection suggests its own sufficient answer. Why did none but immersed believers ask for the Lord's Supper in those days? Was it not because the apostles' teaching prevailed, making immersion essential to baptism? And are not the different circumstances alluded to as now prevailing the result of substituting something else for immersion? Surely, then, the apostles, if living, would *not* accommodate themselves to a state of things which has resulted from disobedience to their own instructions. Their practice, therefore, in regard to the ordinances, is a model for our imitation.

The Meaning of the Ordinances

Shows that baptism should be first, and the Lord's Supper second. Baptism signifies our death to sin and our rising again to newness of life, our fellowship with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It speaks of a change from one spiritual condition to another. It symbolizes the New Birth. But the Lord's Supper signifies the continuance and maintenance of that new life—the constant dependence of the believer upon Christ for spiritual support and growth. Baptism represents regeneration, a single event. The Lord's Supper represents our abiding trust, and ever-recurring duty and refreshment. Writers of various denominations have spoken of baptism as the ordinance of initiation, and of the Lord's Supper as the ordinance of nutrition. In this difference of meaning they have found one reason why a person is baptized but once, but partakes of the Lord's Supper repeatedly. Now, if Christ established two ordinances to represent these two truths, is it not evident that the observance of the Lord's Supper implies that baptism has preceded, and that to

put the Lord's Supper before baptism is to destroy the consistency of their symbolism? If, in spiritual as well as in physical life, birth precedes sustenance by food, and if there are two corresponding ordinances, one of which is observed only once, and the other from time to time, do we need anything further to show what Christ's intention was as to their order?

Nor would the force of the argument from the meaning of the ordinances be destroyed, if it could be shown that the Lord's Supper was not expressive of the believer's spiritual sustenance, but only a memorial of the death of Christ, which brought him life. It would still remain true, that "baptism is the act by which the new-born believer outwardly and symbolically puts off his body of sin and puts on Christ, and thus solemnly enrolls himself among the followers of the Redeemer." Its place is, therefore, at the threshold of the confessed Christian life. But the Lord's Supper is the ordinance in which Christ's disciples revive from time to time, by means of touching material emblems, their memory of the love he showed by suffering for them, and their ex-

pectation of his coming in glory. It is, also, the regular, formal method by which they set forth to an unbelieving world their faith in him who died. It is thus the repeated act of professed believers. Baptism, on the other hand, is not an act of the professed believer; it is rather the act in which the believer makes his profession, the specific act, but once observed, by which he becomes a professed believer. Surely, the formal token of one's becoming a disciple ought to precede the formal token of his continued participation in the privileges and obligations and hopes of Christ's spiritual kingdom!

Now, some advocates for inviting to the Lord's Supper the unbaptized argue as follows: They admit that baptism symbolizes the new birth, and that the Lord's Supper symbolizes the believer's participation in Christ. They also admit that this indicates a natural and appropriate order for the ordinances. "But," they say, "the believer who partook of the Lord's Supper before he was baptized, would be symbolizing his participation in Christ none the less; and if he was baptized after he had partaken of the Lord's Supper, his bap-

tism would be none the less a symbol of his regeneration. In other words, the ordinances are symbolical separately; and if in each case the person has experienced the truth to be symbolized, it is all we should ask. The merely appropriate order should not be insisted on." This way of putting the subject may, at first thought, be somewhat captivating; but it overlooks what we cannot but regard as an important truth. If the things symbolized have no *necessary* order, then, of course, the order of the ordinances which symbolize them would not be significant. But if the things symbolized stand to each other in a necessary relation, as first and second; and if that relation is positively declared and strenuously enforced in the New Testament, as a truth to be proclaimed and defended,—then we are compelled to believe that the Lord, who established the symbols in this order, and meant each to have a meaning separately, also meant them to have a meaning in their sequence. In other words, he meant *their very order* to be symbolical. As baptism, therefore, symbolizes the new birth; and the Lord's Supper, the believer's participation in Christ; so the prece-

dence of baptism to the Lord's Supper symbolizes the necessary precedence, or the prerequisiteness of regeneration to such participation in Christ. The language of baptism is: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; he has risen again to newness of life; he is born again." The language of the Lord's Supper is: "Every member of the kingdom of God is dependent upon Christ for spiritual life, and strength, and hope." The language of the order of the two ordinances is: "*Except* a man be born again, he *cannot enter* the kingdom of God."

Thus the significance of the order is necessary to give completeness to the ritual expression. Surely, Baptists, more than all others, may be expected to maintain it strictly. For this prerequisiteness of regeneration to all participation in God's kingdom is the very truth, which, in our judgment, has been obscured by the errors of Pedobaptism. If it had received its due prominence, there would have been no practice of infant sprinkling, as a substitute for the immersion of the believer, except among believers in baptismal regeneration; no recognition of unconverted persons

as members of a church of Christ; and no union of "Church and State." Against these evils, Baptists have ever felt called to protest. They have not been contending for the mere forms of the ordinances; but for the true meaning of those ordinances, as set forth in the only adequate forms—the forms which Christ has appointed. They have regarded themselves as set for the defence of the great doctrine of regeneration, and its prerequisiteness to all ecclesiastical as to all spiritual privileges. Every real Baptist church and minister proclaim and defend these truths still. We should see to it, therefore, that our gospel in symbol runs parallel to our gospel in words, that neither is robbed of its completeness; but as we ever follow our statements concerning the new birth and the believer's privileges, by declaring that the former is prerequisite to the latter, so let the ordinance which signifies the former always be put before that which signifies the latter. Let us not, by reversing their sequence, curtail their language at the very point where, in our verbal proclamations of truth, we make the strongest stand.

Nor is there any argument for inviting the unbaptized to the Lord's Table in the declaration, sometimes made, that while in a strict view baptism is a scriptural prerequisite to the Supper, it is, after all, only a ritual prerequisite; that, on the other hand, faith is the spiritual prerequisite; and as such, is so far "sovereign over the ritual," that no honest mistake or irregularity as to the ritual qualification should prevent any true believer from coming to the ordinance. To such language we reply, that the spiritual is indeed more important, in some respects, than the ritual —more important for fellowship with God and the hope of heaven; but if the Scriptures teach that both the spiritual and the ritual are prerequisites to the Lord's Table, then one is no more binding *as a prerequisite to that ordinance* than the other is. The spiritual can never be so sovereign as to warrant an omission or perversion of anything which our great Sovereign himself has required. If it could excuse a departure from the true observance of baptism, it could excuse a similar departure from the true observance of the Lord's Supper. One of the ordinances

is as important as the other; and if it is the duty of the disciple to symbolize spiritual truth, and express his loyalty to Christ, at the Lord's Table, it is also his duty to do so in baptism, and to be baptized first, as the Lord has indicated. The spiritual is more important than the ritual, but why was the ritual appointed? Was it not in order the better to conserve and uphold the spiritual? Was it not admirably shaped and adapted to that end? If the Lord has thus given us the ritual, a beautiful vase, as it were, wherein we may more easily keep and guard the heavenly treasure of the spiritual, let us see to it that the vase becomes neither broken nor distorted, nor turned upside down! If Christians have thought it worth while to spare no pains, in order to obtain the language of the original Scriptures, even to the order of the words, because that language is the permanent expression of spiritual truth; certainly it is incumbent upon us to guard with the most sedulous care the exact form and order of those New Testament ordinances, which the Lord intended to be so deeply significant.

The Practice of Early Churches.

We have now seen that the precedence of baptism to the Lord's Supper has a triple support—from the language of Christ, the practice of the apostles, and the meaning of the ordinances. As might be expected from this fact, we find that such was the practice of the churches in the days succeeding the apostles. Neander refers to the Supper, during the first three centuries, when he says: "At this celebration, as may be easily concluded, no one could be present who was not a member of the Christian church, and incorporated into it by the rite of baptism." In speaking of the faithful and catechumens, in the first century, Mosheim says: "The former were such as had been solemnly admitted into the church by baptism, and who might be present at all the parts of religious worship. The latter, not yet having received baptism, were not admitted to the sacred Supper." Justin Martyr, who died about the middle of the second century, is quoted by Dr. Schaff, and also by other historians, as saying concerning the ordinance in his day: "This food is called with us the

Eucharist, of which none can partake but the believing and *baptized* who live according to the commands of Christ."

Pedobaptist Testimony.

The view held at that early age has been adopted by Christians of every name, with comparatively few exceptions, for eighteen centuries. Those who would admit the unbaptized to the Lord's Supper on the ground that baptism is not a prerequisite, assume a position which is opposed to that held on this point by almost all those Pedobaptist denominations whom they ask us to invite to the Lord's Table. Most confessions of faith make baptism the solemn initiation into the church, expecting the convert to be baptized before he receives the Lord's Supper. There may be laxity of practice in some cases, but the principle is one quite generally received.

Says John Calvin: "Baptism is a sign of initiation, by which we are admitted into the society of the church. . . . . After God has once received us into his family, he also undertakes to sustain and nourish us as long as we live; and not content with this, he has

been pleased to give us a pledge, as a further assurance of his never-ceasing liberality. For this purpose . . . he has favored his church with another sacrament."

Says Baxter: "What man dare go in a way which hath neither precept nor example to warrant it, from a way that hath a full current of both? Yet they that will admit members into the visible church without baptism do so."

Says Doddridge: "It is certain that, as far as our knowledge of antiquity reaches, no unbaptized person received the Lord's Supper. How excellent soever any man's character is, he must be baptized before he can be looked upon as completely a member of the church of Christ."

Says President Dwight (Congregationalist): "It is an indispensable qualification for the ordinance that the candidate for communion be a member of the visible church of Christ in full standing. By this I intend that he should be a person of piety; that he should have made a public profession of religion; and that he should have been baptized."

Dr. Griffin (Congregationalist) says: "We

ought not to commune with those who are not baptized, and, of course, are not church-members, even if we regard them as Christians. There is such a relationship established between the ordinances that I have no right to separate them; in other words, I have no right to send the sacred elements out of the church."

Says Dr. Hibbard (a Methodist authority): "Both Baptist and Pedobaptist churches agree in rejecting from communion at the Table of the Lord, and in denying the right of church-membership to all who have not been baptized. Valid baptism they consider essential to visible church-membership. This also we hold."

To these we may add the declaration of Dr. Hodge, of Princeton (Presbyterian), in his recently published "Theology:" "The Christian church requires of those whom it receives to membership in visible communion nothing more than a credible profession of faith, the promise of obedience to Christ, and submission to baptism as the ordinance of initiation."

This list of witnesses might be greatly en-

larged. The fact is, Pedobaptists do not desire to come to the Lord's Table except as they regard themselves as baptized, and any acknowledgment of a right on their part to come, which did not at the same time acknowledge their baptism, any such acknowledgment on the ground that baptism is not a prerequisite to the Lord's Supper would utterly fail to satisfy them.

Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

Mr. Spurgeon admits the unbaptized to the Lord's Table, and they point us to him as a grand example of liberality. But he defends his practice upon this ground, which most Pedobaptist denominations as well as ourselves reject. He not only differs with the Presbyterians, for example, as to what constitutes baptism, but also in regard to baptism being a prerequisite to the Lord's Supper. They would do well, therefore, to observe that, notwithstanding the outward appearance, the variance between Mr. Spurgeon and themselves is really greater than the variance between themselves and us. He is doubtless conscientious in his view. But we do not see how, in

the presence of such clear scriptural indications, we can thus array ourselves against a principle generally cherished by Christian churches. Shall we, for the sake of securing at the Lord's Table a better outward show of agreement, add another to the points of real disagreement? A very heavy burden of proof is upon those who ask us to do so. Until they adduce good scriptural reasons for granting their request, we feel bound to maintain the conservative view.

II. CAN THE WHOLE RESPONSIBILITY BE THROWN UPON THE PARTICIPANT IN THE ORDINANCE?

If the opening of the Lord's Table to the unbaptized cannot be justified on the ground that baptism is not a prerequisite, can it be on the ground that *the church setting the Table should leave entirely to the participant's own conscience the question whether he has really been baptized?* This is the second theory I referred to, and it demands consideration. Those who hold it say: "These Pedobaptists have not really been baptized, but they are sincere in

thinking that they have. Why, then, may not the Baptist church that sets the Table accept their sincerity in the place of an actual fulfilment of Christ's command? The table is the Lord's Table; let no church, therefore, set up rules by which any who think that they have a right to come, are prevented."

To this we reply: The Table is indeed the Lord's, in the sense that it is his gift to his church. But as the visible church is to spread it and maintain it, so she is to guard it and all the truth concerning it with the same fidelity with which she is to guard all the other truths of his word. This responsibility he has laid upon her, and she cannot put it off. It is *because* it is the Lord's Table and not one of her own invention, that she cannot, in the fulfilment of her solemn charge, welcome to it any but those whom she is convinced he regards as qualified. In the same sense in which the Table is the Lord's Table, baptism is the Lord's baptism; that is, it is an ordinance which he has established, and to the observance of which he has attached a blessing. But we would not receive a man for baptism merely because he was sincere in believing himself

to be a fit candidate. We first examine and pronounce upon his fitness. In like manner the church is to decide as to the qualifications of those who come to the Supper. She is to guard both ordinances with equal fidelity. Indeed, we might say, that as the Table is the Lord's Table, so the church is the Lord's church. If Pedobaptists are to be welcomed to the former, on the ground of their sincerity in thinking that they have been baptized, then consistency would require that for the same reason they should be received into the latter. Inviting the unbaptized to the Lord's Supper leads logically to inviting them to church membership; and we need not go far to find instances in which persons, having adopted the former, have found themselves constrained to adopt the latter also. If a Baptist church should thus adopt the principle of welcoming the unbaptized to church membership, then what would prevent it, as soon as the majority of the members were Pedobaptists, from ceasing to be a Baptist church? This tendency is to-day affecting some of the so-called liberal Baptist churches of England, and the Free-Will Baptist churches of this

country. It is said that Bunyan's church has become a Pedobaptist church in just this manner. If sincerity can be taken in the place of what the church regards as scriptural, as a passport to church membership, the principle is as applicable to doctrinal views as to baptism. Then Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, ought not to oppose any Confession of Faith, any Book of Discipline, or any other barrier, to the entrance into their churches of any person who says he loves the Lord, no matter what his views of Christian doctrine may be. We do not believe they are ready to carry out any such logic. It would do away with all church order and discipline, and obliterate the lines by which the churches are distinguished from society at large. But if the church is to decide upon the qualifications for membership, to her also belongs the decision, who is qualified to come to the Lord's Table of which she is the guardian. Otherwise, indeed, her refusal to fellowship error and her sentences of exclusion would amount to nothing, for the errorist and the excluded man might still enjoy one of the highest privileges of membership. Indeed, the whole

principle underlying the view referred to is a false one. Let the church accept sincerity in the place of actual obedience as a qualification for the Lord's Supper, and she must, to be consistent, accept it as sufficient in other things. She must accept it, in the place of her Articles of Faith, as the only basis of church agreement. She would then cease to be "the pillar and ground of the truth," and would become nothing more than the patronizer of all the religious delusions and heresies that men might invent. She would be renouncing her mission, casting into the dust the crown which Christ placed upon her head, and leaving her own purity unprotected. She would be assuming a position which would shut her mouth even against the popular fallacy, that "it is no matter what a man believes as long as he is sincere"—a fallacy that is destroying many souls. She must not do this. She must not do anything which would lead her to be unfaithful to her guardianship of the truth. Without claiming infallibility of judgment, she is yet bound to withhold her fellowship from everything which she believes to be contrary to God's word.

III. THE REAL QUESTION.

Notice, now, the point to which our argument has brought us. If we ought, as some affirm, to acknowledge that Pedobaptists are fully qualified to partake of the Lord's Supper, and if neither their principles (in almost every case) nor ours will allow us to do it, on the ground that baptism is not a prerequisite, or on the ground that their sincerity may be accepted in lieu of actual obedience, *there is only one ground left.* If we ought to welcome them to the Table, it must be *because we ought to recognize their sprinkling or pouring as baptism.* We say to them: BRETHREN, THAT IS EXACTLY THE POINT, THE ISSUE OF THE WHOLE CONTROVERSY, THE REAL QUESTION BETWEEN US. Our views concerning the Lord's Supper do not differ so much from your own. The real divergence is further back. It is not what you call our "Close Communion" which troubles you, but, if you choose, our "Close Baptism." It is in loyalty to what we believe to be the plain teaching of the New Testament—the immersion of the believer on his own profession of faith is the only real baptism—that we con-

tinue a distinct denomination. To ask us to abandon any of the views or practices which follow from that main position, is to ask us to sacrifice or weaken our denominational life. Not that our distinctness as a denomination is worth preserving, aside from the mission which God has given us; but that we must fulfil that mission with earnestness and fidelity. In the mean time, our appeal is to the Bible, holding ourselves ready to consider candidly any scriptural argument, and to be governed by its legitimate conclusions, while we protest against the disposition of our opponents to transfer the discussion into the field of mere sentimentalism. As for restricting the Lord's Supper to baptized believers, it is by no means the main article of our creed. We do not thrust it into special prominence in our preaching, or regard soundness upon it as of more importance to a Baptist than soundness upon other points. No Baptist church regards every deviation from its doctrinal standard as an occasion for exclusion, and certainly none but one disposed to make our views of the qualifications for the Lord's Supper the hobby of its ministry would make it a point to ferret out and force to an

issue cases of laxity of view on this subject, while it tolerated some divergences of opinion upon others even more important. Baptist churches, as well as churches of other denominations, sometimes see fit to overlook slight irregularities of faith and practice in their members. But when they are asked to *license* these irregularities, it is a different thing. They then protest against men's taking their sufferance of an error in exceptional cases as a justification of it by them. The tendency of the agitation in regard to our view of the Lord's Supper is to call attention to it as if it was the great distinctive point in our belief. For this agitation, not we who hold it, but our opponents are responsible. Since they persist in dwelling upon the subject, and in misrepresenting the spirit of it, we are forced at times to reply, and to point out its real nature as a logical conclusion from our position on baptism, and a principle which we hold in common with most Christian churches. We must do this firmly and kindly, "speaking the truth in love." They may divert attention from a calm consideration of our arguments by raising the cry of "Illiberal." But our answer

must be, that while we believe in being liberal with what is our own, we have no right to be any more liberal with what is another's, especially with what is Christ's—his truths and his ordinances—than he has himself directed.

Our Consistency Acknowledged.

It is pleasant to see that thinking men in other denominations are beginning to see the consistency of our position on this point. Said Henry Ward Beecher, in the *Christian Union:* "A Pedobaptist who believes that baptism is a prerequisite to communion has no right to censure the Baptist churches for close communion. On this question there is a great deal of pulling out of motes by people whose own vision is not clear." In another issue of the same paper these words occurred: "We have no disposition to join in the censure which is so freely bestowed upon Baptists for their principle and practice of restricted communion. Their course on this question, however mistaken, is certainly consistent, and we must yield them the respect due to all who adhere firmly to their conscientious convictions." Dr. John Hall, than whom no man

stands higher in the Presbyterian Church today, says, regarding the tendency to heap censure on the Baptists for restricting the Lord's Supper to the baptized believer: "Whether the assailants act wisely or kindly in that matter or not is an open question. It is a course of doubtful catholicity, to raise a popular cry against a most valuable body of people, who honestly defend and consistently go through with what they deem an important principle. 'Charity suffereth long and is kind.' And it is doubtful if, considering the lengths to which liberal ideas have been carried in this country, there be not some gain to the community as a whole from a large denomination making a stand at a particular point, and reminding their brethren that there are church matters which we are not bound, are not even at liberty, to settle according to the popular demand, as we would settle the route of a railroad."

To these may be added an utterance of the *Interior*, the able Presbyterian organ published in Chicago: "We ask," it says, "at the hands of our sister denominations, the liberty to execute our own laws, to know our own theology,

and to manage our own affairs, without being made the subjects of ungenerous criticism. And this which we ask for ourselves we very freely accord to others. The difference between our Baptist brethren and ourselves is an important difference. We agree with them, however, in saying, that unbaptized persons should not partake of the Lord's Supper. Their views compel them to believe that we are not baptized, and shut them up to close communion. Close communion, in our judgment, is a more defensible position than open communion which is justified on the ground that baptism is not prerequisite to the partaking of the Lord's Supper. To chide Baptists with bigotry, because they abide by the logical consequences of their system, is absurd. We think that they are wrong in reference to the mode and subjects of baptism, and should not hesitate to take ground against their interpretation; but we would not be silent about the interpretation, and then charge them with bigotry for a consistent adherence to their interpretation."

We commend to our opponents these words of thoughtful men in Pedobaptist churches. They seem to us prudent and timely. The

real issue between us and them is, indeed, upon the subject of BAPTISM, and that is a question of the interpretation of God's word. Let us hail, therefore, with joy everything which promotes the study of that word, and pray God to speed the day when, agreeing in the truth as it is in Jesus, his people may attain unto a true unity—that unity expressed in the apostle's words: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."

THE END.

THE

MUTUAL RELATION OF BAPTISM

AND

THE COMMUNION.

BY

GEO. D. B. PEPPER, D. D.

PHILADELPHIA:
AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
1420 CHESTNUT STREET.

THE MUTUAL RELATION OF BAPTISM AND THE COMMUNION.

THE question, "What is the mutual relation of the ordinances?" presupposes an answer to the question, "What are the ordinances?" The relation plainly depends upon the nature, unless it be wholly arbitrary and fixed solely by authority. It will be assumed that the views current among Baptists as to the nature of each ordinance separately are correct, and no proof will be adduced in support of those views, except incidentally, as such proof may help to bring into greater clearness the relation. And yet a word of explanation as to the nature of each ordinance seems to be required at the

start. In each there is a prescribed external act. There is a definite something which is visible and outward. That is the only thing witnessed by a spectator. But that alone is no more the ordinance than the visible body is alone the man. There is also the prescribed design of the act—a design which belongs to the rite as appointed, and which is also to be in the mind of the subject, at least germinally. Beyond this there are prescribed conditions to be realized. Finally, all is to be done by the subject in a spirit of obedience. Now, it is plain that the external factor of either rite might be present and some one or all of the others be wanting, or the external might be wanting and some one or all of the others be present. As an unregenerate man, for a base purpose, may perform the outward act, so a regenerate man, with the true baptismal spirit of obedience, under the true baptismal conditions, and with the true baptismal design, may, through error, perform another than the prescribed external act. In the sphere of the outward this man is all wrong; in the sphere of the spiritual alone he is all right. Baptism as a visible ordinance he has not. To the eye

of man, for which the outward rite was prescribed, he is unbaptized. As he stands before the eye of God, in the realm of spirit, he has obeyed the command to be baptized. The same principles hold in respect to the Communion. We thus see that each ordinance is, in this discussion, to be considered in its integrity, since it is the mutual relation of Baptism and the Communion that is sought—of ordinance to ordinance, not of fragment to fragment. Thus, too, it will be seen that the assumption that only the immersed have been baptized implies neither that all the immersed have been truly baptized, nor that all not immersed are still acting in a spirit of disobedience to the Lord. We pass no such judgment upon them, either in thought or by the implication of our words, and no man should charge us with so doing.

But it is time to leave preliminaries for the work in hand. The topic divides itself into two main branches. We have to answer these two questions:

I. WHAT IS THE RELATION OF THE ORDINANCES TO EACH OTHER?

II. WHAT IS THE TRUE DOCTRINE CON-

CERNING THE MAINTENANCE OF THIS RELATION?

The first inquiry leads us more into the field of theory, the second into that of practice; but no correct answer can be given to the second until the first shall have been correctly answered.

I. WHAT IS THE MUTUAL RELATION OF THE TWO ORDINANCES?

1. *They stand to each other as co-ordinates—in the relation of co-ordination.*—They are of the same order, rank, value, dignity. The one is not the subordinate, subject, or inferior of the other, so that the one may rule, modify, or displace the other, or in any way claim or receive a pre-eminence over the other. This position is so obvious as to make its formal treatment seem superfluous, yet so important as to justify any attempt to emphasize it.

Looking to the *origin* of the two ordinances, we find them invested with the same authority. We need raise no question here as to Judaic Baptism or as to Judaic love-feasts. Whatever the historical connections of either ordinance, whatever the occasion giving rise to either, the express appointment and com-

mand of Christ made each ordinance Christian, and gave to each its sole whole authority. "Go ye into all the world, baptizing." "This do in remembrance of me." The same lips uttered the two commands; the same Lord gave the commands equal authority.

Looking to the *perpetuity* of the rites, we find them co-ordinate. That they are to continue to the end of time, invested with all their original authority, is the almost universal conviction of Christendom. We find given their law, with no limitation as to time indicated, with no authority to repeal delegated. But we are not left to inference, obvious and sufficient as it would seem to be. To the commission to preach the gospel and baptize is annexed the specific designation of the extent of time, "Alway, even unto the end of the world," while of the Communion it is said, "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show the Lord's death till he come." The coming of Christ is at the end of the world, and the end of the world at the coming of Christ. Thus, with a statutory precision of statement, the great Lawgiver fixed at the same point the limit of continuance for the two.

Again, looking to their *design*, we see coordination. To avoid repetition, this point will not be expanded. It is enough to say that they both relate to the same inward life, and to that life in the same way or ways. If the one presupposes the life, so does the other; if the one expresses the life, so does the other; if the one symbolizes the life, so does the other; if the one is a means for the development of the life, so also is the other. They stand related to the same Source of life, and in the same way. With equal distinctness and emphasis they set forth Jesus Christ as Saviour, body forth to view the Atonement as the central doctrine of the gospel, the central truth of moral government, the central fact of human history. So, also, in the constitution of the church, the function of the one is as essential as that of the other, and in general is of the same kind. To state these points is to prove them, at least to Christian men. They need no proof. It is not that each rite has not its own distinctive characteristics and serves not its own specific ends. This, too, is no less evident; but in the respect of design, all that goes to determine rank, value, dignity, may be affirmed of both alike.

In their *constitution*, also, we find co-ordination. The constituent which meets the eye is an external physical act, as destitute of moral character and value, taken by itself, as is riding or walking. It is, in both cases, a voluntary act of the individual, yet not of the individual as unrelated. Association with another party appears in each. The unseen spiritual constituent is related to the same life and in the same radical essential manner. It is the same life expressing itself according to the same law of both authority and divine adaptation—in the one case as a beginning, in the other as a continuance. The conjunction of the inner with the outer is of the same nature in the one as in the other.

Thus are we led to the same conclusion, whether we look to the origin, the perpetuity, the design, or the constitution of the ordinances. We find no subordination, no superiority. They stand on a common level and have equal rank. Whatever respect is due to the one is due to the other; whatever despite is done to the one is in principle done to the other. They stand before us clothed in a like beauty and sublimity, claiming equal admi-

ration and honor. View them as we will, in their relation to Christ and to God, or to the believer, or to the church, or to the world, we cannot discriminate. He who makes of one folly pronounces both foolish. He who sees in one wisdom calls both wise. They stand or fall together, for, because of their co-ordination, no reason could be devised for maintaining one which would not demand the maintenance of both. And this is the testimony of all history within and without the church, whether we look to the judgments expressed or to the practices maintained.

2. *They are related to each other as antecedent and consequent—Baptism the antecedent, and the Communion the consequent.*—Perhaps it may seem that, as here stated, this position also is to every Christian self-evident, and hence needs neither proof nor development. There may seem to be wanting another word to make the proposition worthy of discussion. If it were to run thus: *invariably* related as antecedent and consequent; this might bring the position within debatable territory, and justify an effort at defence. But the question of variableness or invariableness has and can

have no place here. If it be a question at all, it is a question as to the maintenance of the relation, whether we should invariably maintain the natural and ordained relation of the two; whether this maintenance is indispensable; or, in current language, whether baptism is an indispensable prerequisite to communion. That question shall have attention in its own time and place. Here the question is on the relation of the two ordinances as antecedent and consequent. And since the ordinances, as ordinances, are just what the Lord ordained them to be, one thing, and not anything different, if they are once in nature antecedent and consequent, they are and must be, as respects nature, ever and everywhere antecedent and consequent. If they were such when and where Christ instituted them, they are and must be such universally and infallibly. They can never cease to be such, for they can never cease to be just what they were. Some other things bearing the same names may bear an opposite relation to each other, but we have here to do with nothing else than the ordinances themselves.

The first evidence for our position lies in

the known nature of the two ordinances. And in the word nature is here included the design, and, indeed, all that goes to constitute them what they are. This is a legitimate, and, in some respects, the most satisfactory, kind of evidence. Sovereignty is not arbitrariness. God's will of command and his will of control ever accord with the divine reason. A bare command satisfies faith, but reason perceived satisfies reason. The ordinances in large measure interpret themselves, and this interpretation is confirmed, clarified, and enlarged by Scripture. We can, therefore, approach this part of the subject with confidence and hope.

They have each three interdependent yet distinct characters and uses. Each is at once an act of faith, an exhibition of truth, and a component of church organization. In the first particular it is a deed, in the second a word, in the third a thing. The first element is purely personal, the second general, the third ecclesiastical; the first transactional, the second declarative, the third constitutive. In the first something is done, in the second something is shown, in the third something is

formed. Let us take up these three characters successively, and see whether in every part, from first to last, they stand as antecedent and consequent.

As a *personal transaction*, Baptism is in Scripture comprehensively denominated "putting on Christ." Gal. iii. 27. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ put on Christ." This is first done as a purely spiritual act in the first spiritual reception of Christ by faith; it is done in word by the spoken confession of this faith; it is done sacramentally, or in the way of ordinance, in Baptism, and only in Baptism. The purely spiritual act embodies itself in the appointed outward act, and therein completes itself. The Communion, on the other hand, is comprehensively denominated the communion of the body and of the blood of Christ. But communion with the Lord, in the sphere of the purely spiritual, is the act of a soul that has put on the Lord. It is the continuous act by which the divine life, already originated in the new birth, is sustained, nouriched, and perfected. The Communion is, in the sphere of ordinances, this invisible fellowship—its embodiment and

completion. Such, in general, being the nature of the two acts separately, their relation is manifest. They stand as the inner acts which they embody. Origin precedes development. Creation cannot follow preservation. We come to Christ before we commune with Christ. If regeneration is the antecedent of sanctification, Baptism is the antecedent of the Communion. As the soul comes once, and only once, into union with Christ, as in fact it never does dissolve this union, and, on God's word, could not be renewed again to repentance if it were to dissolve it, in no man's case is there a foundation in experience for Baptism after the Communion.

If the complex personal acts of baptism and communion were each analyzed, the same relation of their constituents would be seen to exist. Baptism is a separation, a first separation, from a previous life of sin, from a godless world, from a state of condemnation; it is a washing away of sins once and forever, an act unto pardon. Communion, on the other hand, is the act of one who has been separated, who is separate, to whom separation is an accomplished fact, a permanent condition, an

acknowledged characteristic, of one who has been pardoned. Thus the act of death to sin, of renunciation of the world, the whole active voluntary separation from the evil, which has its prominent place in baptism, is presupposed in the Communion. Baptism, again, fronting toward Christ, is a consecration to him, an accepting of him, an identification with him, with his people, with his cause; it is taking for the first time, and once for all, the Christ side instead of the world side, the Christ life instead of the world life. But what is Communion? It is from first to last, in all its elements, the act of a friend with a friend. It presupposes the completion of the union, the stability of the union, and within this union it wholly moves. This is why, in Baptism, we have none of the festive element, while the Communion is predominantly festive. There is all the difference that exists between a birth and a feast.

We see, therefore, that the two ordinances, as personal acts, stand as antecedent and consequent, whether we look at them in the general or in the particular.

Take them next as *exhibitions of truth.*

Here they are memorials, declarations, symbols, and prophecies. First as *memorials*. Each brings to view facts of history. The baptismal water immediately reminds of Jordan, and the baptism itself of the scene at Jordan, when Jesus went down into the waters and was there buried and again rose. This was the formal, solemn, ordained separation and consecration of himself to his work of Saviour, his identification of himself with his people. There in ordinance he took upon himself our sins, as in ordinance we, by baptism, take upon ourselves his righteousness.

The Communion, on the other hand, reminds us of a fact later in Christian history, of the evening of the betrayal. In the elements we see, too, the body and the blood. We see Jesus after his sacrifice has been completed, after his death.

The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ are indeed set forth in Baptism, and the death of Christ is shown forth in the Communion, and thus we seem to lose the relation claimed. But it is not lost, for the one shows the death as in process of accomplishment, by which Christ *became* the soul's life; the other shows it as an already accomplished fact by which

he *has forever become* the soul's life—its meat and drink. And here we find the explanation at once of his baptism and of the most significant expression; "It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." In ordinance he there bore the sins of the world and became to the believer "the end of the law for righteousness." And if from the realities the mind is carried back to the foreshadowings, we find the circumcision preceding the paschal feast, both in the time of its origination and in the order of its observance. One became an Israelite before he acted as an Israelite.

Next as *declarations*. We have already viewed the ordinances as the acts of a believer with reference to himself. As declarations they show to others what is the actor's condition. Baptism declares him to have come into Christ. Communion declares him to be abiding in Christ. They declare the subject to be in these two successive states. The Saviour designed them for signs, and for true signs in respect to the one receiving them. The declarations, true or false, stand related as the acts, and these we have seen are as first and second.

Again, as *symbols* they have the same relation. A symbol proper is a visible natural object or fact which represents or images an invisible spiritual reality. It is alike impossible and needless here to go minutely into the symbolism of the ordinances. Enough that we know, that Baptism symbolizes, with singular clearness and fulness, the central spiritual realities pertaining to the origination of a holy life. It sets forth the nature of the two states, sin and holiness. It shows on what principles provision has been made for a transition from the former to the latter state. It reveals also the nature of the activities and instrumentalities involved in the transition. And standing up, solitary and alone, it proclaims also the nature of that electing love and preserving care which keep forever the child that has once become a child. Baptism speaks of origination, only of origination. The Communion, on the other hand, symbolizes, with a like clearness and fulness, the central verities pertaining to the perpetuation of the Christian life. Though itself not a sacrifice, it shows life to be forever rooted in sacrifice. It appears as a ceaseless communi-

cation of divine love through Jesus Christ to the heart of man, received and appropriated by a living faith. It strikingly presents the oneness of the believer with the Lord, which is yet a oneness of absolute and ceaseless dependence. But it has nothing to say of origination. It tells us not how we come to be in Christ. It supposes that to have been already told. It takes up the story where Baptism lays it down. Thus as a symbol it follows Baptism.

Finally, they are *prophecies.* We seize upon the central prophecy of each. In Baptism it is the believer's glorious resurrection. This is to be at the Lord's second coming, in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels, for the punishment of the wicked, for the world's renovation, for the completion of the mediatorial work in the introduction of the whole family of the redeemed into their state of completed, final, eternal glory, when death itself shall have been destroyed, and "God shall be all in all." The Communion is a prophecy of the glorious fellowship into which that advent of Christ and the redemption of our bodies are to introduce us. And

thus we find the ordinances as prophecies holding still the relation belonging to them as memorials.

Hence, as exhibitions of truth, the ordinances give their evidence of relationship. As memorials, as declarations, as symbols, and as prophecies, they speak one and the same language. They can be tortured to speak no other.

In gathering the testimony borne by the nature of the ordinances, we have still to consider them as pertaining to *church organization.* Among both Protestants and Papists there is a general agreement that one of the prime signs of a true church is the proper administration of these two ordinances. It is hardly too much to say that they are the organization of the church. We do not, indeed, forget the place which the gospel, as the word of God, is to have; but the gospel spoken is the interpretation of the gospel embodied in ordinances. Gospel and ordinances are the same thing in two forms, in the form of words and in the form of deeds. And since the church is a body visible, that which visibly embodies its life in its origin and perpetuation,

in its relations God-ward, world-ward, and self-ward, may most fitly be deemed the very constitution of the church. Great stress has sometimes been laid upon the voluntariness of confederation, upon the form of government, upon the number and nature of the offices, upon the mode of expressing the will of the body—a stress so great as to make it appear that the essentials of church life and church organization are the same as the essentials of a debating club or of an insurance company. In this view the ordinances are simply the property entrusted to the church, not the very organism by which the church exists. Their nature and the indications of Scripture seem to frown upon such a view.

The favorite representation of the whole church is "the body of Christ." And as each local church is to realize, in its measure, the ideal of the one church, every church is the body of Christ. 1 Cor. iii. 16. And how does Baptism stand with reference to this body? Is it not its very origination? This question is settled by Paul when he writes to the Corinthians: "For in one Spirit we all were baptized into one body." 1 Cor. xii. 13. It makes

not the least difference whether baptism here is the inward, spiritual, invisible baptism, or the outward, ritual, visible baptism. If it is spiritual, then it is into the spiritual body; if ritual, then it is into the visible body, the outward church. In the latter case, the passage directly answers our question by declaring that we are baptized into the church—*i. e.*, to become members of the church. It is the act of origination, of creation. In the former case the language carries the same conclusion, for the ordinances correspond in their sphere to the spiritual facts in their sphere. If visible baptism were not baptism into the visible body, the apostle could not have spoken of a spiritual baptism into the invisible body. With this we take the expression, "baptized into Christ," and find in it the same doctrine. We are baptized into him so as to become his members, and members in just the sphere that the baptism *can* constitute us such, in his visible body. This idea that entrance into Christ's church is by virtue of a vote of the church, and that Baptism is a detached fact, in no vital, necessary, constitutive relation to the body, merely a preliminary qualification, is as

untrue to the harmonies of Christian truth as to the direct word of revelation. The vote, or, rather, the consent, of the church, is *contained in the baptism.* The ordinance is not to be administered without the consent. The consent or vote is merely the decision of a body whether a given person may become, by and in baptism, a member. But it is the baptism that makes the membership. Acceptance of members from other churches is not strictly the creation of membership: it is more of the nature of a recognition. The command to be baptized is addressed to the believers, but this contemplates the co-operation of another party, and that party is the church. The church baptizes, and the vote is merely the decision, which is carried to completion in the act, and thus the union is consummated. That old-fashioned phrase, "Baptism the door into the church," does very well. "Baptized into the church," and "received by Baptism," or "added by Baptism," are still better phrases. The gospel knows no visible church lying in part outside of visible churches. It is not intended that the decision of a local church is not necessary to give one the rights of membership.

As to the Communion, its place in the church is fixed by fixing that of Baptism, as also by its own nature. Paul, too, makes the one loaf to represent the one body—a body, therefore, not coming to be, but already existing. Hence the Christians came together to partake of the Communion. It was not merely a remembrance of Christ, it was a remembrance in communion both with him and with one another. We have, therefore, in the ecclesiastical character of the ordinances, the same relation of antecedent and consequent that we had already discovered in them as acts of faith and exhibitions of truth. This completes the evidence from their nature.

Further evidence is drawn from the *incidental testimony of Scripture concerning the relation.*

The order of their institution first claims attention. God teaches the order of nature by the order of time which he follows. Let us take two examples from many. The giving of the law at Mount Sinai stands over against the proclamation of the gospel by Christ and the apostles. This order in time is based upon an inner order of nature. Gos-

pel presupposes law. The order is not gospel and law, but law and gospel. Reverse this and we have nonsense; we have deliverance with no previous bondage, pardon with no existing guilt, cleansing with no antecedent pollution. No; the order of nature must be law and gospel, bondage and deliverance, guilt and pardon, pollution and cleansing, death and resurrection. It is certain that those two sublime facts of history, that on Sinai and that on Calvary, were timed as they were because the relation of law to gospel is what it is. Take a second example within the gospel dispensation. The work of Christ accomplished in the flesh, especially his work of sin-bearing or atonement, is the ground of the Spirit's work in the soul of man. Christ's work and the Spirit's work in redemption stand as first and second. To reverse the order is impossible. There must be a Christ before there can be faith in Christ; there must be a blood of cleansing before the cleansing blood can be applied. The things of Christ cannot be shown before they exist. The fixedness of this inner relation, this order of nature, is to Christian experience self-evident. And to

nothing is there more and clearer witness borne both by Holy Scripture and by the literature of the church. Now mark the correspondence of the historical development. We recognize, indeed, *a* work of the Spirit dating from man's fall. The death of Christ and the action of the Spirit in a certain sense preceded the coming of Christ and the coming of the Spirit. We can, however, leave that out of our present account, as it has its own easy explanation. We find Jesus affirming, while on earth, that his departure to the Father must precede, in time, the descent of the Spirit. If I go not, he comes not—such is the statement. And so it was. He passed into death, he came from the grave, he ascended into heaven, before the promise of the Spirit was realized. Nay, to emphasize the order of sequence, the disciples had to tarry in Jerusalem for a time after the ascent, awaiting the promised advent.

Turn now to the two ordinances, and note the times of their institution. That puerile inquiry, raised in defence of Rantism, whether John's Baptism was Christian Baptism, we may assume, can have only one answer, and that affirmative. It was certainly from heaven.

Jesus himself submitted to it, as did some of his disciples, while, in the person of his disciples, the Lord, throughout his ministry, continued to baptize. The commission, "Go ye, baptizing," gives no indication that the ordinance was thereby instituted. It regards the ordinance to be administered, as it does the gospel to be preached, as already known, a thing in existence. John's Baptism and Christian Baptism are in essentials identical. The time of the institution of Baptism is thus fixed at the beginning of John's ministry. The Communion, we know, was instituted at the close of the Lord's ministry. As in the other examples, so also here, the order of time teaches, and was designed to teach, the order of nature.

We find further evidence for our position in the commands enforcing the observance of the ordinances. It will be found uniformly that the requirement of Baptism links it with the commencement of Christian life. The great commission links its administration with the making of disciples, while instruction in all other Christian duties is made to follow. So, when sinners under conviction would know

what they must do to be saved, the command to be baptized is coupled with the command to repent, or, rather, a single command is given, including as its two objects the inner and the outer act, baptism in the Spirit, baptism in water. Thus, too, was Paul bidden to arise and be baptized before he performed any other outward Christian act. Indeed, so strongly is the connection affirmed, that many find in the language the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration.

Quite otherwise is it with the command to observe the Communion. It was given at first to the twelve as a body of acknowledged believers, placed not at the commencement of their devotion to Jesus, but after that had been long recognized and proved. In the commission it was doubtless in thought prominent among the "all things" whose observance was to be taught, but which are mentioned after Baptism. And when Paul gives, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, directions concerning the observance of the Communion, he addresses himself to those who are recognized as Christians, who are within the Church; and not only that, but he directly

teaches, that it is in this capacity that they are statedly and continually to observe this ordinance. It is needless to tarry on the bearing of the commands, for they fix the order unmistakably as being that of antecedent and consequent.

One further evidence under this head remains, that which comes from practice in apostolic times. This is too familiar to need more than a passing notice. There is sufficient reason to suppose that the twelve had been baptized before the evening of the betrayal. Where baptism is said to have been administered, it was immediately upon credible evidence of faith in close conjunction with repentance. "They that [gladly] received the word were baptized" as soon as they manifested this true reception, and thenceforth they continued steadfast in the breaking of bread. The epistles assume that saints are the baptized, that churches which observe the Communion are composed of such.

A third class of evidence comes from the *faith and practice of the whole body of professed Christians since the apostles.* The ordinances have both been mangled, torn from

their places, abused, but it has been reserved for a few men of this age to conceive and advocate the delusion that they stand to each other in no relation of consecution; that neither is first and neither is second; that either may be first and either second. The doctrine and the practice of all nominally Christian bodies not rejecting the ordinances have borne uniform testimony to the correctness of our position. Baptism has been torn from its right relation to the Communion; not, however, to put it after, but to carry it too far forward. Even those who clamor against the maintenance of the established order admit its existence.

Thus we complete the argument proving the relation of the two ordinances to be that of antecedent and consequent. Evidence has come from their nature, from other testimony of Scripture to the relation, and from the whole of the nominally Christian church. We had previously established their co-ordination.

We advance now to a last position.

3. Together *they constitute one organic whole.* They are inseparable one from the

other. They do not stand as two duties each complete in itself. They each require the other for a complement.

Little need be said in support of this view. All the evidence which supports our last position is equally good for this. The maintenance of that relation was because of an inner principle. We ask here just what the principle is. The ordinances, as already observed, are visible embodiments of invisible realities. As the realities are related, so are, *so must be*, the ordinances. Now, the realities, as we have seen, are comprehensively the origination of spiritual life and the continuance of that life. How stand these to each other? Regeneration and Sanctification, are they independent? Each in itself a whole? Life coming to be, life continuing to be, one life. Where were the continuance without the becoming? Where were the becoming if there were strictly no continuance? When we can dissolve the connection between becoming and being, in anything save the self-existent, we may affirm that Baptism does not require the Communion and the Communion Baptism to constitute a whole.

Or, if we look out of the soul of the believer to the source of his life, it is to reach the same conclusions. What were a Saviour who once took upon himself our sin, once died, was buried, and rose, if he were not a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek in the holy of holies, forever presenting the sacrifice which forever avails? Is there any completeness in either act as by itself? Where were the heavenly mediation without the earthly sacrifice? What were the earthly sacrifice without the heavenly mediation? Here are not two things, but one thing in its two inseparable, indivisible parts.

If it is certain that Baptism should precede the Communion, it is certain that this precedence is not that of one independent fact to another. It is that of two inseparable, correlated parts which together make an organic whole.

We thus complete our answer to the question, "What is the mutual relation of the ordinances?" We have found them to be, (1) Coordinates; (2) Antecedent and consequent; (3) Together a unit, one indivisible whole.

We pass now to the second general division of our subject.

II. THE MAINTENANCE OF THE RELATION.

1. *This relation ought to be maintained.* This is a truism. To argue for it is almost to insult reason.

Without the maintenance of the relation the ordinances themselves are not maintained. Plainly this is true, because the relation is a part of the rites. Baptism after the Communion is not Baptism, and the Communion before Baptism is not the Communion. Our last position establishes this. A continuance of that which has no beginning is not a continuance, and a beginning which is not a first is not a beginning. You may as well say that 13 is 31, because you have the same separate characters, as to say that Baptism and the Communion are the Communion and Baptism. If you can keep your number only by keeping the order of your figures, so you can keep your ordinances only by keeping the order of the ordinances.

The relation should be maintained because it is divinely ordained. The reason why the ordinances themselves are to be maintained is that they are ordinances, *i. e.*, that they have been ordained of God. Is it not clear that the

relationship which is lodged in the inmost nature of the two is itself an ordination if the two are ordained? While, therefore, the two remain this relationship remains, and while they remain ordinances this relationship remains an ordination. And can any man conjecture how there can be a reason for preserving an ordinance arising from the fact that it has been ordained, but no reason for preserving an ordination which is lodged in the ordinance by the divine Author? He who can, has a power of conjecture and imagination which disqualifies him for the sober work of a theologian, or of a reasoner, and should remand him to the region of pure fiction.

Again, the ordinances cease to be acts of faith unless they keep their proper relation. Christian faith is inseparable from Christian truth. The believer is of the truth. Truth is in his inward parts, characterizes him, is at the springs of action. A believer, acting as a believer, cannot act a lie. But if one with full knowledge of the import of the rites begin with the Communion, he does act a lie. He says in act, in a most solemn, formal act, "I have a spiritual life which did not begin." If

he be baptized after he has communed, he lies, for he solemnly, sacramentally affirms, I now first begin a life, which yet he has long declared to be his. He comes into Christ for the first time, though he has been already abiding in him. In declaring such acts to be lies, it is *only* on the supposition that the acts are performed intelligently, with an understanding of their true nature. Our argument requires the consideration of no other cases.

Further, if the organic relationship be not kept, the ordinances become an exhibition of falsehood rather than of truth; they set forth, not the gospel of life, but a perversion and subversion of the gospel. As memorials they cease to conform to New Testament history. They stand in contradiction to it as well as to common sense. They show our Lord first as having passed through death and then as entering death. Thus at the start they brand themselves with absurdity.

As declarations of the believer's state, they, in their inversion, work still more aggravated mischief. He who commences with the Communion affirms, by silent implication, that no such change as regeneration has passed upon

him, or had need to pass upon him before he could fitly commune with God. It is the destructive heresy of a goodness inherent in his nature, the denial of his need of the death of sin and of the new birth. And what is proclaimed when baptism at length is received? Is it not that now at length there is a change like that of the new birth? The gulf is thus made, where our higher-life friends place it, not between unbelief and belief, but between two stages of Christian experience. But it has not even this significance, for it is not proposed to fix it at any such crisis of life or to connect it with any such crisis. What, then, shall it mean? Confusion, delusion, mockery. Contempt must gather around the ordinances and those who submit to them if, as declarations of states, they are made to utter this Babel confusion of folly.

Is it better when they are taken as symbols? Nay, worse, for here we pass at once from the particular to the general. They speak now not of facts of history, nor of the condition of particular persons, but of the great doctrines of grace, of the central verities of our faith. They are here a summary of the gospel.

ling as our Lord gave them, co-ordinate, a first and a second, a beginning and a continuation, one sublime, self-consistent, correlate whole, they body to view with a matchless impressiveness, with a power all their own, unknown to the written word, the very gospel of God's salvation. Change now this relation, and what have you? No longer the grand harmony of heaven sung to the eye; no longer the one mighty truth of revelation self-consistently bodied to the view. Nay, that is gone forever, lost from the world, and in its place is left a lying, self-contradicting confusion. You see, now, Regeneration at the centre of Sanctification, and Santification half or quite complete before Regeneration. You see men suddenly passing from death to life who have for years been in life, and yet after the passage they have the same life as before. Christ's heavenly intercession on the basis of atonement made once for all is suddenly arrested, in order to make the atonement. And thus it is to the end of the chapter. Can a man seriously propose to project into this world of ours, which so needs the one clear voice of God's truth, this monstrous falsehood

to take the place of that truth? Alas, that blindness or malice should ever have proposed it.

And not a whit better is it when the ordinances, after inversion, undertake to prophesy. The jumble continues. We find ourselves at the heavenly feast in the completed glory with our spiritual bodies, when suddenly is heard the blast of the trumpet which heralds the second coming of Christ, and the general resurrection, and the final judgment, and the consummation of all things. The feast is broken up. The past and present appear as illusions. Nothing is consistent. Everything is disjointed. And then, when this confusing interruption subsides, we find ourselves just as before, nothing changed, nothing effected. What a burning shame even the very thought of such an outrage on these gracious prophecies, which, as they now stand, carry the soul onward to the harmonies of hastening glory! Oh, brethren, what say you to this outrage, and to this series of outrages, grievous beyond expression, which interference with the order of the ordinances, with their inmost nature as correlates, proposes to inflict upon them? Is

all this a light thing, a trifle only, a non-essential matter?

Again, the maintenance of the relation of the ordinances directly involves the maintenance of the integrity of Christ's church, because, as we have seen, the church has in these its coherence and symmetry, is framed into them and consists in them. If we rend asunder the bond of organization, we rend the body organized. While the church stands in these ordinances as they form one whole, it will have the beauty of a true body of Christ, a body separate from the world, complete in itself, and a fit exhibition of the Lord in his saints. The moment a ruthless hand is laid upon them all is changed. See the havoc wrought by the changes already made in them! Are we ready to go further, and not only introduce still another change, but one more unnatural and monstrous, if possible, than any yet ventured upon? God forbid!

The relation ought to be maintained because its maintenance has been commanded. But says one and another, Where is the command? Wherever the command exists to observe the ordinances, or either one of them. The ordi-

nances are the ordinances, and not something else. If they are observed, *they* must be observed, not something else; and, as we have seen, they are not simply a one and another, but a first and a second, and that, too, as constituents of a whole. If the *ordinances*, Christ's ordinances and not ours, are kept, they must be kept, not as a one and another, but as a first and a second, two inseparable constituents of one indivisible whole. What means this perpetual demand for the precise command for the maintenance of the order? It means that he who asks it fails to see what is the very nature of the gospel ordinances.

The command is reinforced by apostolic example. The relation was maintained while the apostles lived. What they would have done if they were alive to-day may be conjectured; what they did we know. A conjecture born of a personal preference shows little modesty when it asks for a higher place in the settlement of a question than it will give to such a fact as that before us. We might still add, as further reason, the judgment of the church universal, but pass to the second inquiry under the general head of the maintenance of the relation.

2. *By whom is the relation to be maintained?* We have seen the absolute necessity of its maintenance, but the question of duty is not settled until it is known upon whom this necessity is laid. The following positions will doubtless be acknowledged as true, if not self-evident.

The maintenance of the relation must be by some agency. The ordinances have no power of self-preservation and self-perpetuation, no power to guard themselves from abuse and disfigurement. They are incapable of receiving command. Their first appearance was by agency, and they at once cease to be when agency is withheld. Plainly, their purity has never been entrusted to themselves, as a man's obligations are to himself.

The agency required must be other than the Lord's own. There seems to be a practical disbelief of this axiom. We are gravely told that the ordinances are the Lord's ordinances, and hence we must have nothing to do with them. The philosophy is as profound as that of the deacon who refused to put upon the church edifice a lightning-rod because if the Lord chose to burn his own property man

should not interfere to prevent. He ought to have taken higher ground, and said, if the Lord wanted a meeting-house he must build it, that man ought not to pretend to know God's wants better than God does. It is impossible to treat with seriousness the conceit that the law of the ordinances is not to be maintained by men because, forsooth, the ordinances are the Lord's. Are they his? Yes, in one view, as instituted and prescribed by him. Are they his? In another view, no; not his, but man's—man's as appointed for man, to be observed by man.

Hence, we hold that the men for whom they have been instituted and prescribed are to maintain the order of correlation given in them. Those who have no right to them are not to maintain it. It is given for maintenance exclusively into the hands of those to whom the ordinances are given—to believers in Jesus Christ, to those who have passed from death to life, and who are to body to view this inward change and the blessed state that follows. To argue this point is to waste time, breath, and patience. Let us, then, pass to the last question under this head.

3. *How shall believers maintain this relation?* The answer is easily given.

First, each one must himself observe the ordinances as given. This personal compliance is at the root of purity; and if all Christians were to fulfil this condition, there could never be any inversion or confusion. But if one complies and another does not, then come discord and disturbance. And as neither ordinance is merely a subjective state, or the subjective state *plus* an external act other than that prescribed, the discord and disturbance arise just as truly where non-compliance is the result of ignorance and misconception as where it comes from wilful and wicked perversity. The disturbance is in the sphere of the ordinances, which is the sphere of the visible. And it is just here that our previous argument has shown the imperative necessity of the established harmony. The plea of sincerity has no place nor application here. That avails in its measure upon the question of personal guilt or innocence, of personal standing before the Judge. But with such questions we have here nothing to do. We ask concerning the maintenance not of the integrity of individual

character, but of the integrity of God's ordinances. Let us never be befooled into an identification of these totally distinct issues. As long as any believer, for any reason whatever, fails in his own person to observe the ordinances as God has given them, which is to observe them both, and in the order which belongs to them, and instead thrusts either from its place or totally casts either away, so long is there failure of a universal maintenance of the order among God's children. This leads us to state,

Secondly, that those who personally observe them as given must unite in this observance, and thereby separate from those who do not. There is, there can be, no option. Two can walk together in those things in which they are agreed, in nothing else. We can fellowship the spirit with which a Pedobaptist consecrates to God his child in his so-called ordinance of Baptism, if he be sincere and believe himself to be acting in obedience to God's command. We can fellowship the mental act of this child when, in future years, converted through God's grace, he accepts that infant sprinkling as truly Scriptural Baptism. We

can fellowship most truly and completely the spirit of a Pedobaptist church of sincere and devoted Christian members as they come together to the Lord's Table and partake of the elements. Every Baptist Christian must needs have the most profound sympathy and fellowship with this act in its spiritual aspects, and can pray most fervently for God's blessing upon that body of Christians in this act. But the spiritual states of the parent consecrating his child, of the grown-up child accepting for Baptism his infant sprinkling, of the Pedobaptist church partaking of the elements, are each and all in the sphere of the invisible, and not at all in that of the visible, which is peculiarly the sphere of the ordinances. We fellowship the acts in their purely subjective elements. We must disfellowship them in their external elements. And since we cannot go with these parties into outward acts which violate our clear conviction of divine truth and requirement, we must prove our fellowship with their spirit in another way than that of participation in their outward deeds. Were it possible to divide the act into its two elements, the inward and the outward, and so

separate them one from the other that we could be seen to perform the one and refrain from the other, then we might show our participation as we cannot so long as the act is indivisible. And if here it be asked whether it be not as well to pervert so long as the same blessing comes, the answer is at hand. First, only the ignorant and sincere have this blessing. Again, we do not determine our duty in the presence of God's plain command by a further question of utility, but the command settles it for us and cuts off all utilitarian queries. And yet again, though for a time a perversion may not work havoc with the religious life of the perverters, it ever tends to that. Finally, the question of utility must look to the universal bearings of the perversion, and not simply to its effect upon the ignorant perverters. Hence we say that those who know what God's ordinances are, and who observe them, must separate themselves from those who cannot be made to know what they are and to observe them, and unite together, keeping as the Lord gave them those two glorious embodiments of the gospel, of Christian life, of salvation itself. And if any

man here asks whether this separation and confederation must be complete and invariable, this is to ask whether, when God says, "Thou shalt not steal," it is really meant that one is not to steal occasionally and in small amounts. Away with this senseless query as to invariableness! We have to do with a question of principles, and principles are not variable. Nor is there any conflict between the true love of God and the principles of God's truth. Distrust the blind promptings of sentiment where there is the light of doctrine, otherwise you drift into Universalism and perdition while fondly dreaming that you yield to the attractive love of heaven, and are drawing with you the unwashed, unsanctified all.

A last method of maintaining the mutual relation of the ordinances is by sound speech, by open, manly, brave, kind testimony, by clear argument. Silence is often golden, but it is sometimes worse than silver, copper or lead: it is rottenness and cowardice. We need not play on a harp of one string only, but we should not refuse its place in the harp to any string. Especially should we not be ashamed to defend the integrity of ordinances upon

which our Lord has placed a dignity like that with which he has distinguished Baptism and the Communion.

And now, in closing this discussion, one query must needs press itself upon the thoughtful mind: Why the combined, vehement, and persistent attack of other denominations upon Baptists for adhering to a principle which, while so manifestly and manifoldly important, is not only clearly scriptural, but also accepted and acted upon as such by the assailants themselves? When their own churches not only are, but from the start have been, framed and conducted upon this very principle, why do they demand of us the surrender of the principle? Ostensibly it is for union. They ask us to break with them on the principle of action that we may join them in the form of it. But do they thus stultify themselves? No; assuredly not. When they come with the demand that we admit them to the table of the Lord, their demand is not for admission as unbaptized believers, but as baptized. They will not come as unbaptized. They will not be so received. The demand is nothing else than for a recognition of the validity of their

baptism. This, this is the real point of the controversy. The assault upon our "Close Communion" is but a covert assault upon our hated doctrine of Baptism. Are Baptists ready to surrender that doctrine and pronounce it unscriptural? Probably not; and if not, they are not ready to surrender their doctrine of the Communion. Union in truth is the only union that we either want or will have. If our doctrine of Baptism is untrue, may we be soon enlightened! if true, may we never be driven to surrender it!

THE END.

Date Due

GTU Library
2400 Ridge Road
Berkeley, CA 94709
For renewals call (510) 649-2500

All items are subject to recall

KX3
B22
P
v.2

11394